

THE



DIAL

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HONORE DE BALZAC

BY HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL

Translated From the German by Kenneth Burke

ONE does not know this great author at all if one knows only this or that by him. There is no one specific volume containing the essence of his creative life, in the way that Faust or the poems encompass the essence of Goethe's life. Balzac is to be read in the mass; and it requires no art to read him. He is the most logical reading for people of the world—the words being taken in their broadest sense—from the law clerk or the young man starting in business, up to the personage of note. For people of the world (I am speaking of men from all classes, of politicians, soldiers, commercial travellers, distinguished or simple women, all those who are not *littérateurs* or aesthetes, people who read for the pleasure of exercising the imagination, and not for educational purposes) a slight effort is required at times to read Goethe, a certain transposition. It is more than likely that Goethe will fail them in the most trying and confused moments of their existence; but Balzac is always open to them. I do not mean this in the literary sense: for in Goethe the first line they open to is sure to be something remarkable, a striking of some deep note, a felicity of expression; and in Balzac they will come upon three or four dull tiresome pages, not solely at the beginning of a story, but quite probably at whatever place they happen to open. But as they run mechanically through these indifferent and almost burdensome pages, they will begin to feel the effect of something to which the true reader, the living human reader, must always succumb: the

greatest and most substantial imagination that has existed since Shakespeare. Wherever they open, at a digression on the laws relating to bills of exchange and on the practice of usurers, at an excursus about legitimist or liberal society, at the description of a kitchen, or a scene in married life, of a face, of a drinking den, they will feel *the world*, substance, the same substance of which the daily rounds of their lives are constructed. They will pass immediately and spontaneously out of their own lives and into these books, out of their personal cares and annoyances, out of their own love-affairs and financial concerns, out of their trivial problems and ambitions. I have met the financier who, immediately after his meetings and his conferences, reached for his Balzac, in which he had stuck the last jottings of the market as a book-mark; and I have met the lady of fashion who found in *Les Illusions Perdues* or *La Vieille Fille* the only possible reading which could restore her to herself in the evening after having been among people or having entertained, the only reading which is strong and pure enough to soothe the imagination after the harsh and distracting fever of vanity, and to reduce the social to the human. This process of touching one at the very centre of his life, of healing like with like, of defeating reality by means of a demoniacally heightened reality—I wonder who among the great authors with which our spiritual life has to do could rival Balzac in this particular; unless it be Shakespeare. But to read Shakespeare as other generations have read the ancients, I mean to read him in such a way that one can get the whole of life out of reading him, to read him from the standpoint of living, and to satisfy through him the most pressing essential of one's curiosity—that is no ordinary matter. It is no ordinary matter to stretch one's sympathy until it reaches across the distance of three centuries and penetrates all the disguises of a magnificent but unfamiliar epoch, perceiving behind them nothing but the eternally true flux of human action and passion. It is no ordinary matter, without the aid of the actor, without a quite definite gift for recreating the original image, to take the most genial abbreviation and compression which has ever been realized and to spread it out again to such a panoramic breadth that one can find there both himself and those highly complicated threads of existence which weave together to give his reality its meaning.

In a certain sense, Goethe is easier to read; and who does not read him? Although he was making one of his deep and subtle observations when he said that his writings were not made to become popular and that their true content would reach only those isolated people who had gone through the same internal experiences, there seem to be so many of these isolated people to-day that his statement may no longer apply. But to recover one of his works, to enjoy *Hermann und Dorothea*, *Wilhelm Meister*, *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, one must come to it with the senses already purified. He must leave behind much of himself, much of the atmosphere of his life. He must forget the metropolis. He must cut through the myriad threads of his momentary feeling, thinking, and willing. He must think only of his "transfigured" body; I mean by that the eternal part of himself, the pure human, the unconditioned. He must take into account the eternal stars, undergoing a castigation thereby. Then to be sure, it is hardly of importance which of Goethe's works he turns to; through them all he meets the same heightening and transfiguration of reality. The matter and the form, an idea or the description of a phenomenon in nature, a verse, or *Mignon* or *Ottillie*—everything is of the same divine and radiant substance. Behind every line one feels the relation to the whole, to an exalted order. The enormous peace of an enormous richness lays itself almost oppressively on one's soul, lifting it immediately afterwards into a sphere of freedom and light. . . . But this arm which can raise to the stars does not embrace everyone. Even the living Goethe gave himself only to a few, and to these few only at certain times. If one reaches out with an impatient hand, a creation like *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* escapes him, snaps shut like a mussel. To such people Goethe seems cool, foreign, strange. He impresses rather than attracts. They put off reading him—until quieter times, until some journey. Or he makes them yearn for their youth again, for a sharper receptivity. He seems artificial to them, he who was nature itself; and cold, although he could give warmth to rigid, primeval stone. They look for some method which will prepare them to enjoy him. They turn to an exegete, or to the remarkable letters and conversations in which he annotates himself . . . and it is only by this circuitous route that they get back to his works. But nothing is more unthinkable than the reader who would arrive at Balzac by some indirect approach. It is rarely that one of his

countless readers knows anything at all of his life. Men of letters know a few trivial anecdotes about him, but they would interest no one if they did not bear on the author of the *Comédie Humaine*. They know of a correspondence with *one* person, containing almost nothing but bulletins of an incessant gigantic activity which is beyond comparison with anything else in the world of letters. It is the strongest indication of the enormous drive to his works that we can read these endless bulletins with the same suspense as a note of Napoleon's when on one of his campaigns, a note dealing with Austerlitz, Jena, or Wagram. His readers know his works, and not him. They say "Peau de Chagrin," and are reminded of a waking dream, an adventurous experience, not of a poet's inventions; they think of old Goriot and his daughters, and it does not enter their minds what the name of the author is. Once they came upon this world; and ninety out of a hundred are sure to return, after five, ten, or twenty years. Walter Scott, who was once read with delight by mature people, has become the reading of boys. Balzac will remain always (or for a long time; for who dares to speak of "always"?) the reading for every stage of life, and of men as well as of women. The war stories and adventures, *Les Chouans*, *L'Auberge Rouge*, *El Verdugo*, mark for the imagination of a sixteen-year-old boy the release from his tales of Indians and of Captain Cook. The experiences of Rubempré and Rastignac form the reading of a young man; *Le Lys Dans la Vallée*, *Savarus*, *Modeste Mignon* that of a young woman. Men and women around forty, who are ripe and not yet impoverished, will hold to his ripest works: *La Cousine Bette*, a magnificent book which I cannot call lugubrious even though it contains nothing but the ugly, the sad, and the horrible, because it also glows with the fire of life and wisdom; and *La Vieille Fille*, which combines, in a manner beyond praise, a plastic structure with the most profound knowledge of life, becoming thereby small, round, comfortable, jovial, in every consideration an incomparable book, a book which would be powerful enough to preserve by itself alone the reputation of its author through the centuries. I have heard an old man praise the *Contes Drôlatiques*, and have heard another old man mention with emotion the story of César Birotteau, this steady mounting of a social pillar from year to year, from bank balance to bank balance, from marriage to marriage. And if there have been people who have cut the

Bekenntnisse der Schönen Seele out of Wilhelm Meister and burned the rest, then there have also been people who have cut Séraphita-Séraphitus out of the Comédie Humaine and made of it a kind of Bible; and perhaps such a one was that stranger who pushed his way up to Balzac in a concert hall in Vienna to kiss the hand that had written Séraphita.

Everyone finds here as much of the great whole of life as is homogeneous to him. The richer his experiences, the stronger his imaginative powers, the more of these books he will be able to accept. Here there is no necessity to bring in something from the outside. All the emotions, impure as they are, are here put into play. Here one finds his own interior and exterior world, except that it is more compressed, more unusual, and illuminated from within. Here are the powers that define him, and the encumbrances by which he is lamed. Here are the diseases of the spirit, the appetites, the half unconscious aspirations, the consuming vanities; here are all the demons which squirm within us. And above all, here is the great city to which we are accustomed, or the province with its definite relationship to the great city. Money, the egregious power of money, the philosophy of money, the myth of money—all this reaches its embodiment here. Here are the social stratifications and the political alignments which are still more or less ours; here is the fever of *arrivisme*, the fascination of work, the solitary mysteries of the artist and of the inventor: everything down to the paltriness of the petty *bourgeois*, to the watching of every penny, to the frequently and painstakingly repaired glove, to the gossip among the servants.

The external truth of these things is so great that it can exist independently of its object, so to speak, and shift like an atmosphere. The Paris of Louis Philippe has vanished, but certain situations (the provincial *salon* in which Rubempré takes his first steps into the world, or the *salon* of Madame de Bargeton in Paris) applied until recently with astonishing accuracy to Austria, where the social and political conditions were perhaps very close to those of the July monarchy. And certain features from the life of Rastignac and de Marsay are probably truer to-day for England than for France. But the superficiality of this "truth" which is so self-evident and so convincing to us, the entire first great glory of the *modern-ness* in these works—this will pass; yet to-day there is more strength

and more life than ever in the inner truth of this world (a world projected by the imagination and touching the ephemeral reality only for a moment, at thousands of incidental points). This world, the completest and most fully elaborated hallucination that ever was, is loaded with truth. Under examination its corporeality resolves itself into a system of countless centres of energy, monads whose nature is the most substantial truth. In the ebb and flow of these life movements, these love stories, these intrigues for money and power, these scenes in the country and the small towns, anecdotes, monographs of a passion, of a spiritual disease, or of a social institution, in the jumble of almost three thousand human existences, the author touches on nearly everything which has a place in our complicated cultural life. And nearly all that is said of these myriad things, relationships, phenomena, bristles with truth. I do not know whether any one has undertaken (although one might do so any day) to compile a lexicon drawn entirely from the works of Balzac. It would contain nearly all the material and spiritual realities of our times. It would be lacking neither in cooking recipes nor in theories of chemistry. The details on commerce and finance, the most precise and useful details, would fill columns. Under business and trade one would learn a great deal which is antiquated, and much more which is eternally true and highly to the point. And under the proper heading one could find the boldest presentiments and anticipations of discoveries which later centuries have made in the natural sciences. Each treatise compiled under marriage, or society, or politics would make a book in itself, and each a book without an equal among the philosophical publications of the nineteenth century. The book containing the article on love would swing in a bold curve from the most sinister and impenetrable mysteries (*Une Passion Dans le Désert*) through a rich chaos common to all humanity, ending in the most spiritualized type of angelic love; and by the vastness of its conception, the range of its diapason, it would overshadow the one famous book bearing the same name and written by the hand of a master. But after all, this lexicon does exist. It is spun into a world of characters, into a labyrinth of incidents; and we are turning the pages of this lexicon as we follow the thread of a splendidly devised story. In these volumes the man of the world will find transfigured the whole range of those situations—so imaginary and yet so real—

which go to make up the social element of our lives. The countless nuances whereby men and women can treat one another well or poorly; the imperceptible transitions, the relentless gradations, the entire scale from the genuinely dignified to the half dignified, to the common—all this is given with flexibility, shot through with the human, the passionate, in an astonishing manner, and at times reduced to its nullity. The man who is earning his living (who of us does not have to earn his living, or to guard what he already possesses, or to suffer deprivation?) has his whole life here: all in all. The great trader on the exchange, the practising physician, the hungry and the triumphant inventor, the big schemer and the petty schemer, the progressive business man, the business lawyer, the usurer, the mere figure-head, the pawnbroker; and not one type of each, but five, ten types; and what types they are! And with all their tricks of the trade, their secrets, their remotest truth. There is a legend among painters that all those final intimacies which are said of modelling by light and shadow in *Le Chef-d'Oeuvre Inconnu* must have derived from Delacroix; these truths seem to them too substantial for any one but a painter, and a great painter, to have found them out. The thinker who has been given Louis Lambert as the monograph of a thinker may find the biographical part weak and may doubt the reality of the character; but as soon as he comes to the letters and notes with their ideological material, then the consistency of these thoughts, the substantial power of this thinker, becomes so convincing that every doubt about the character is dispersed. One may accept or reject these thoughts, this philosophy, of a spiritualistic dreamer—but they are the thoughts of a personality, and this brain *has* functioned. And if the married man picks up in a meditative hour the *Physiologie du Mariage*, this peculiar book which is perhaps demoded somewhat by a certain half-frivolous tone, he will come upon some pages in which the truths are as delicate as they are deep and important: true truths, truths which, when one has really accepted them, expand somehow and maintain an activity within, with a soft and luminous energy. They are put forward in a worldly, at times even a wanton, fashion. Woven in among actions and descriptions, they form the most spiritual elements in the body of a story, a novel. They are revealed to us in just the way life itself reveals its content to us: in meetings, in catastrophes, in the unfolding of passions, in sudden perspectives

and discernments, in apertures opening with lightning-like swiftness through the thick forest of appearances. Here is at once the most passionate and the most complete depiction of life, and a highly acute and surprising philosophy which can situate its point of departure in any phenomenon of life, no matter how trivial it may seem. So this whole great work—whose cosmogony is quite as lugubrious as that of Shakespeare, and in its sheer mass becomes thereby so much the more oppressive, turbid, and heavy—is permeated nevertheless by a spiritual vivacity, yes, a spiritual joviality, a deep comfort. For how could we call that anything else which—when one of these volumes falls into our hands—makes us always keep turning the pages back and forth, not reading, but turning the pages; for in this act there is a subtler love, full of memories. And is it not this joviality, this comfort, which can transform for us the mere counting of the titles of these hundred books, the listing of the characters who appear in them, into a kind of summarized reading where the appeal is as complex and as spontaneous as that of a favourite poem?

The accumulation of so enormous a mass of substantial truth is not possible without organization. The faculty for order is just as much a creative one as the faculty for presentation. Or rather, they are simply different aspects of one and the same faculty. Out of the truth of countless isolated phenomena there arises the truth of the relationships existing among them: in this way a world is produced. As with Goethe, I feel myself in a sure relationship to the whole. There is here an imperceptible system of co-ordinates by which I can orient myself. Whatever I read, one of the great novels, one of the short stories, one of the fantastic-philosophic rhapsodies, whether I dip into the secrets of a soul, into a digression on politics, into the description of an office or a shop, I never fail to find this relationship. I feel: around me there is an organized world. It is a great mystery that this tight, encompassing world, this second, more restricted and more insistent reality, does not oppress us like a burden, does not strangle us like a nightmare. It does not have that effect; it does not halt us and stiffen us, but the sight of it puts fire into our veins. For it itself does not halt, but is in motion. Everything is flux. Here, behind these books, which in their sum total form the greatest epic conception besides Don Quixote of the modern world, the idea of the epic art-form seems to be awakening. To

describe men who blossom and vanish like flowers of the soil! Homer does precisely this. Dante's world is rigid. The things themselves do not go by, but in his wandering he passes them. We do not see Balzac; but we see with his eye how everything moves. The rich become poor, and the poor become rich. César Birotteau gets ahead and the Baron Hulot falls behind. Rubempré's soul was an untouched fruit; it is transformed before our eyes, and we see him seize the rope and make an end of his tarnished life. Séraphita struggles until she is free, and soars to Heaven. Everyone is what he was not, and will become what he is not. Here we are as close to the roots of the epic attitude as we are in Shakespeare to the roots of the dramatic. Everything flows, everything is in transition. Money is only the felicitously discovered symbol and the vehicle for this continual and varied movement. Money brings out the potentialities of a thing. And it is in the nature of this world, when viewed in this broad and epic manner, that everything should express its full potentialities. There are fluctuations everywhere, and nothing but fluctuations, in the world of ethics as well as in the world of manners. The fluctuations between vice and virtue—two mythical concepts which no one knows exactly how to encompass—are graded with the same delicacy of modulation as the fluctuations between rich and poor. Things removed farthest from one another and the most emphatically opposed, possess certain affinities whereby everything hangs together. Between a *concierge* in a basement apartment and Napoleon at St Cloud some mysterious momentary affinity can flash up; and it is infinitely more than a mere bit of grotesquerie. In the world everything quite plainly acts on everything else; how could this profound interdependence be otherwise? Everything flows; nowhere is there a solid block, neither in the spiritual nor in the external. Love and hate seem far apart and sufficiently circumscribed; and I know this or that character of Balzac in whose breast one of these feelings flows into the other with the imperceptible gradations of the colours of glowing iron. Does Philomène hate Albert Savarus, or does she love him? She loved him at the beginning, but at the end she seems to hate him; she acts under an obsession which is perhaps hate and love at once, and if one might ask her she would not be able to say from which of these emotions she was suffering. Here an abyss separates us from the world of the eighteenth century, with such concepts as it had of

virtue, which are hard, round, dogmatic, and well adapted to replacing the rigid concepts of theology. Here every mythology is thrown overboard, even that of words. And nowhere are we closer to Goethe. Quite near, indeed even in the same channel, the deep stream of Goethe's philosophy is roaring. But it was a fundamental part of his temper that he should turn to the opposite shore. The fluctuating powers of his nature were so mighty that they threatened to overwhelm him. He had to oppose them with the rigidity of nature, laws, ideas. He turns his mind's eye on the permanent aspects of the changing. So we see his face; and it is the mask of the reflecting Magus. We do not see Balzac's face rising above his works like an Olympian mask. Except that within his works we feel that we have seen it emerge at times; it is that of a visionary, and is heaved up out of chaotic darkness; out of swirling masses. But we are not able to fix it. Every generation will see it differently; will see it as a titanic face, and in this way convert it into a symbol of ineffable interior processes. We marvel that we do not possess it painted by the hand which created the *Massacre de Chios* and *La Barque du Dante*. He would have painted Balzac at thirty as the Titan that he was, as the demon of life; or he would have treated the face as a battlefield. It is an astonishing lacuna that the mask of Balzac at fifty has not been handed down to us by Daumier. His wonderful pencil and his equally wonderful brush would have brought out the magnificent faunlike quality of the man, and would have ennobled it with the savage loneliness of genius. But perhaps these generations were too near him, and the distance which separates us from him was requisite before something like Rodin's work could be created: this superhuman, thoroughly symbolic face in which a frightful weightiness of the material is joined with something dull, heavy, and demoniac which is not of this world. A face in which the synthesis of entirely different worlds is fulfilled; it is reminiscent of a fallen angel, and also of the boundless dull sorrow of primitive-Greek earth and sea demons.

Each generation which, through its intimacy with Balzac's work, produces a vision of this face, will resolve it into a similar synthesis combining the entire burden of life with the deepest urge towards the overcoming of this burden, towards redemption, towards triumph. The kinship to the dull oppressive mass of life which continually fructifies itself, and at the same time the desire to break

away from this, the deepest yearning of spirit for spirit: such is the signature of this great tragic face which does not seem to be peering beyond us into the eternal as with the mask of Goethe, but to be penetrating us, to be looking straight into the burden of life.

This seeming materialist is a passionate seer, an ecstatic. The essence of his characters is aspiration. All powers of suffering and of love, excitations of the artist, monomanias, these titanic energies, the great motors of his world—these are aspirations. They all aim at something supreme, unnamable. Vautrin the genius as criminal, and Stenbock the genius as artist, Goriot the father, Eugénie Grandet the spinster, Frenhofer the creator—they are all adjusted to an absolute which is on the point of revelation, just as ships tossed about by a storm in the night are adjusted to the existence of a polar star even though it is concealed in blackness. In the depths of their cynicism, in the maelstroms of their tortures, in the abysses of renunciation, they seek and find their God, whether they call him by name or not.

Here is a world swarming with characters. There is not one among them so powerfully conceived, so complete in itself, that it might be taken out of its background and exist alone in the immortal perfection of its gestures, as with Don Quixote, or King Lear, or Odysseus. The material is more fragile. The vision is not of such radiant clarity that characters could stand out from it; it is not modelled in the purest and strongest light, as the Homeric Achilles, as Nausicaa, nor in the most delicate half-light, as Mignon and Ottilie. Everything forms a whole; every part is conditioned by its other parts. It is as impossible to take a section out of the whole as is the case in a painting by Rembrandt or by Delacroix. In both cases the sublime is situate in a stupendous wealth of tone values which form an unbroken scale, *in finitis modis*, as with nature itself. The other type of character seems like a liberated, marching god; it is an impenetrable mystery how such figures may have arisen. Balzac's are the individual notes of a titanic symphony. Their origin seems more comprehensible to us; we believe that we carry in our blood the elements out of which their gloomy hearts are constructed, and we feel that we draw these elements out of the air of the great cities. But here too there is something ultimate, something beyond. The scale from dark to light in a Rembrandt resembles earthly light and earthly darkness purely by the fact that it is unbroken, convincing, and absolutely accurate; but above and

beyond this there is the activity of something nameless, the functioning of a great soul which surrenders itself in these visions to a higher nature. In the same way, in the myriad minute strokes with which Balzac depicts a swarming world, there vibrates something ultimate which it would be hard to name. The plastic of this world approaches the oppressively heavy; its darkness borders on nihilism, its urbanity of treatment on cynicism. But the colours in which this is painted are pure. A choir of angels by Fra Angelico is not painted with a purer brush than the characters in *La Cousine Bette*. These colours, the really fundamental elements of the spiritual, have no vestiges of drabness, of sickliness, of blasphemy, of baseness. They are incorruptible, and immune to all contagion. An absolute gaiety vibrates in them, untouched by the ominousness of the theme, just as the divine gaiety of the tones in a Beethoven symphony can never be distorted for a moment by the formidableness of the musical expression.

WINTER TWILIGHT

BY MABEL SIMPSON

Now is the Earth so still no breath
Can pierce her slumber, deep as death.

Her eyelids droop, and deaf is she
To brook and meadow, bird and tree.

The whispering branches cannot move
Her heart with little words of love,

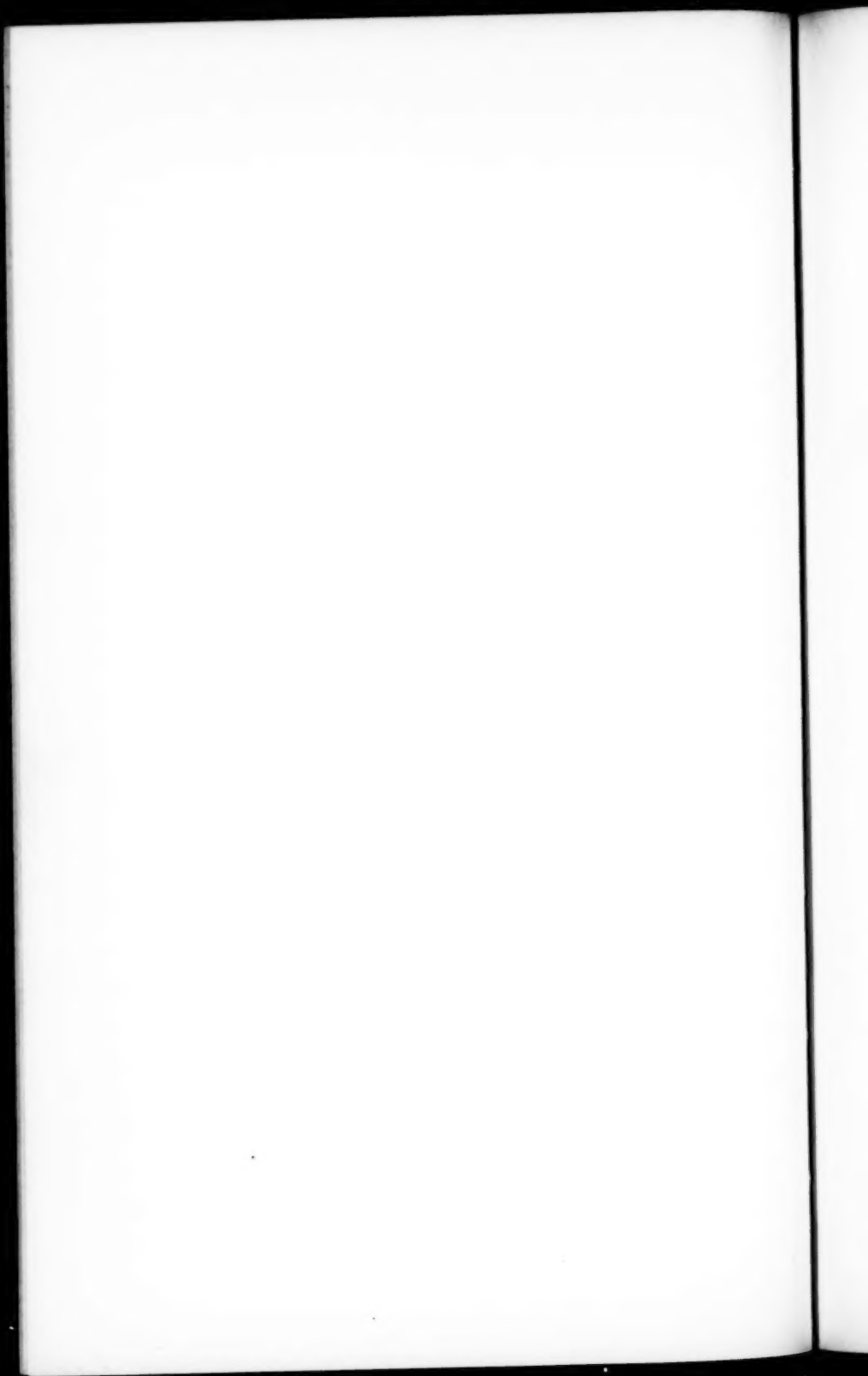
Nor can the small hare's sore distress
Awake in her a piteousness.

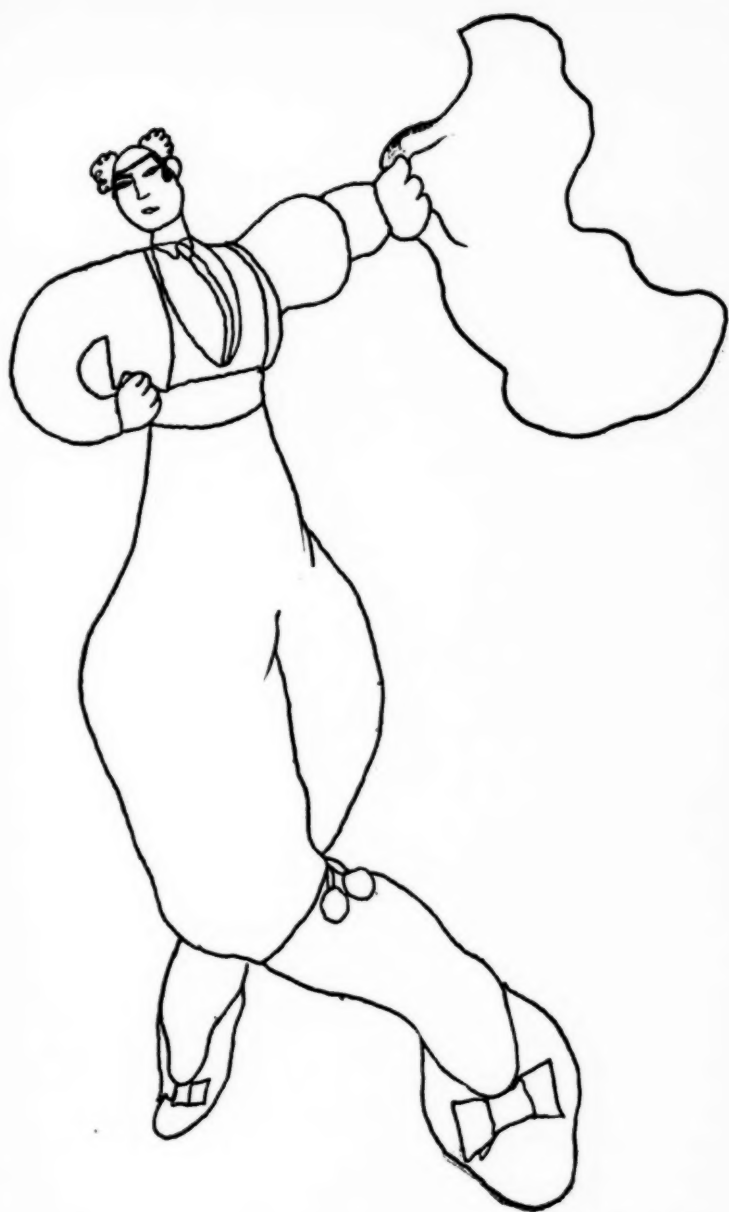
Her wondering children gathered near
Murmur and tremble, sick with fear,

She sleeps, she sleeps, and does not hear.



LE VOYAGEUR DANS LES GLACES. BY JEAN COCTEAU





LES GRENOUILLES ET LES TAUREAUX SE PRENNENT AVEC DU ROUGE.
BY JEAN COCTEAU





LE POETE ET SA MUSE. BY JEAN COCTEAU





L'EXPRESSIONISTE. BY JEAN COCTEAU

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THE OLD LADY

BY EVELYN SCOTT

THE old lady was often to be seen walking on the beaches overlooked by the hotels. She had been tall, but was now stooped, and always advanced slowly, and with the help of a cane. In spite of the expensive soberness of her dress, of fine stuffs not quite in the fashion, yet much discussed by the maids in her hotel who expected generous remuneration for their services to her, the old lady had not that aloof confidence in herself and her position which is the usual endowment of wealth. She smiled too frequently into the faces of those who looked at her, and her excessive benevolence was like a subtle self-apology.

Her thoughts could not be read, and that was fortunate. When she awakened in the morning in a stately bed, from which, against an opposite wall of her large room, she saw an *armoire* flanked with mirrors give back her image, she always, when possible, avoided the contemplation of this reflection; or, compelled to confront a revelation which caused her pain, remarked inwardly, "Can it be I?" and tried vainly to recall another almost-obliterated impression of her own features. Queer that, remembering so distinctly the most minute incidents of a past that had been filled with dramatic interest, able to visualize with exactitude the appearances of each of her friends, to-day dead or separated from her by years and oceans, she had so much difficulty in piecing together from fragments retained from the lost years, even the vaguest representation of her own countenance as it had been caught in looking-glasses long ago. People who had been dear to her, and even the people she had once disliked, had not aged, nor had they died, in that they existed continually in her thoughts in every moment of the time. Only her own personality, in its once-youthful aspect, had disappeared in the nothingness of a feeble present. She sighed, and said to herself, "Well, I never was pretty." Yet without being pretty she had commanded affection and even very strong feeling.

It frightened her a little that she had become someone whom

she did not know, someone whom she could not look at with clear eyes.

For all the sadness which pervaded her meditations, she did not, with truth, call herself unhappy. She slept badly, dreaming often of her married daughter whom she had not seen for many months, and of a dead son; but always, after noting the thinning of the darkness by a dawn yet scarcely visible and feeling, upon her dry cheeks and in her scanty hair, the still wind which rushed in a tide of freshness from the suddenly audible sea, she would turn upon her side, and, as if some sentinel duty of the night had been accomplished, find that she could rest easily. Then, from this hour into the morning, she would sleep like a child and awaken when the sun was shining rosiy upon the gilt-flowered bedroom walls, while the lace curtains between the window-hangings of brown-and-cream brocade seemed to expand as with an ecstatic delicacy, and, in the gilded foliage of the dark plane tree beyond them, birds sang.

Her maid, entering the chamber, and bringing the morning coffee in an immaculate service, received a cheery "*Bon jour*," but, offering to assist the old lady at her toilet, was invariably sent away with a refusal couched in the same terms. "Not yet, Françoise. The time for that has not yet come." And the old lady dressed herself. She waited for something miraculous to occur. Every morning approached her with an adventure which, finally, in the heat of noontime, had not revealed itself.

She felt that Françoise was a "good girl," who should be treated generously, and the maid, stout, handsome, and slyly officious, with the characteristics of a peasant initiate in the ways of the rich, adopted in her manner toward her prosperous mistress, the attitude of a mother. The old lady was not deceived as to the motives which prompted this consideration, yet, in the passiveness of temperament engendered by old age, did not condemn. "Well, poor girl. I must try and do something for her. I'll leave her something in my will." And the old lady felt drawn to the girl by the very exposure of self-interest which, it seemed, should have been repelling. To know that someone depended on you, if only for money, made you feel that your presence in the world was yet of importance. Generous pity relieved the heart of the old lady from the oppression of exhausted but persistent emotions

which had no outlet. There was no one to whom the old lady could express herself.

Yes, she was lonely, though had she been asked if, in this loneliness, she wished to depart to an oblivion in which loneliness is not felt, she would have said, "No," sincerely and emphatically. Trifles which had once been of no account to her, objects and incidents which, in her youth, had failed to interest her, now compelled her whole attention and were infinitely precious. She loved her careful walks through the French town. She loved the hardy appearance of the cabbages planted in small gardens behind low fences covered with creepers. A neglected bush of marigolds, jutting ruddy-coloured blossoms beyond a wall, excited in her a tenderness for growing things. She watched the dark swallows in their bat-flights above a puddle in the road, and their shrill bleats, coming vaguely to her deaf ears, made her think of them innocently as lambs. Strong sunlight, stagnant upon the plaster façade of a dwelling, enchanted her. When, with a final exertion of her ever-waning strength, she climbed slowly, among heaps of refuse, to the summit of a crooked street which terminated on a hillside, and could gaze below her, between ancient roofs which interceded in the view, at the countryside—the still avalanches of the mountains, the small villages crushed under the red roofs that surmounted the houses, the acres of vines, tremblingly outspread in the soaring light of morning and resembling still lakes of green silk—the immense silence which lay beyond the town in which she was visiting seemed to her to enwrap her benevolently, and the whole world, dissension and struggle obliterated, was a friendly place.

It was only at noontime, in the heat of the day, when, after taking her luncheon in the table d'hôte downstairs and, with nodding head, listening for half an hour to some Spanish singers who, on a terrace ornamented with palms and young trees in pots and covered over by a pergola on which roses twined, were entertaining the guests of the hotel, she rested in her bedroom, that she felt depressed. The sunshine filled the street below her window, but the stillness it made, as the heat arrested the play of children and hushed their voices, and footsteps became so occasional that they echoed on the cobbles as footsteps echo in the night—this stillness was terrible and oppressive.

She lowered the Venetian blinds upon her balconies, and, in a semi-glow, in which the unchanging aspect of objects in her room became pronounced, she lay on her bed again, her eyes closed, and tried to sleep. Sleep was impossible. Her cheeks, pale and withered and covered by a scarcely-perceptible down of white, were hot and parched. With no relief from the violence of the light, that, even through drawn curtains could be discerned in the stolid brilliance of a stucco building opposite the hotel, she moistened her lips, several times adjusted the pillow beneath her head, and, without being conscious of the sounds she uttered, moaned slightly.

Her health was bad. At any moment she might have a recurrence of the heart-trouble from which she suffered, a malady from which she would, at last, most certainly die. But it was not of death that she thought. Indeed she refused to think of death. It pleased her better to imagine that she would live a long time—a long, long, long time. And when, in her promenades, her steps turned inadvertently toward the cemetery, with its crumbling mausoleums making little intimate avenues for the dead below the black-green lines of conical cypress trees, she experienced, in her first glimpse of the tombs, decorated as for a perpetual holiday with wreaths of coloured beads, black, violet, pale-blue, and white, and with bouquets of artificial flowers, a sudden shock of fright, of amazement—of some emotion which she did not attempt to describe—and turned back.

Why was she travelling like this, going all over Europe, from one hotel to another, rarely encountering an acquaintance and certainly not amusing herself in the ways habitual with tourists? In her young days she had been too much occupied with personal affairs to give much of her energy to travel. There was a great deal of the world that she had never seen. Now that her daughter was married, absorbed by interests in which the old lady had but slight part, and her son was dead, she, the old lady, had uninterrupted opportunity to see odd corners of the globe that had always intrigued her—even the names of the towns she visited were those that had, years ago, seemed to her remarkable. Besides she had a terror, continual if not dwelt upon, of being unwanted, and so, rather than remain as a tolerated outsider in her daughter's home, she had preferred the company of strangers who were not obliged to show her any attentions that were not quite spontaneous.

On the terrace of the hotel, under the pergola covered with roses and with foliage which had turned blue and artificial in the glow of the electric lamps, the old lady sat in the evenings, watching those who came and went from the dancing in the saloon, while she tried to make herself unobtrusive. If a young couple, approaching her, ignored her, and it could be seen that they were covertly making love to one another, the old lady moved further away into the shadows and out of hearing. There she was able, when lifting her gaze, to discern the stars which, at one instant, appeared to her quite brilliant, while the next minute she saw only darkness, and could hear, distant under the rotating melody of a waltz played by an orchestra, a rushing sound in her ears which might be the sea and might only be the beating of her own heart. She always preferred to think the sound was the sea, and then she would rise and walk about, still clinging to the shadows and, because she was forgotten, feeling her own person as the person of another whom she also desired to forget.

No, the day was happier than the night. She loved children. In her black dress and bonnet, she often walked, with her stick, along the beaches. There she encountered children. She recalled the delights of her own childhood and longed to be able, in some manner, to indicate to the children, in some way which would convince them, that she had been a child, and that childhood was not foreign to her, as they supposed. And she was humiliated by something grotesque in this longing, as if she had convicted herself of a jealousy of youth.

The children paid no heed to her, and, screaming as they ran, they brushed past her blowing skirts, brushed past her and ran down to the sea. Feeling a pain which was so ignoble that she refused to recognize it, she thought, "They are so young. They don't understand." And she prayed to be able always to love children as she did now, and to wish for them, with her whole being, saturate with gratitude for a happy past, a continuance of their light-heartedness.

After such an experience, returning to the hotel, she wrote letters, to keep herself from growing "stale," as she smilingly called it, letters to her daughter, letters to old acquaintances—some of them had almost ceased to take account of her existence—and the reward for this insistent attention to those who were far away,

perhaps for ever, was an interest in the coming of the postman, so keen that it embarrassed her. Often the mails brought her nothing at all, or there came a letter from some old friend who, burdened with age, expressed herself entirely in the utterance of complaints. "Poor Jane, poor Sally, poor Louisa," the old lady would say, and try to evade the fact that she had anticipated a letter of a different kind, a letter containing something stimulating, something of especial interest, or something complimentary to herself. It seemed to her that her own troubles would have been quite bearable if only her dear old friends could find, as she did, the philosophical compensations of maturity. Occasionally, in her travels, she encountered a woman like herself, old, isolate, seeking, in new sights and scenes, a substitute for the personal drama which was finished. "Poor woman," the old lady would say of the other old woman, then, suddenly, realizing that the one she pitied was like herself, and alarmed by the sense of an intolerable identity, she would conjure up cheerful thoughts and, from that time forward, gently avoid the new acquaintance, and this without any intention of being cruel, but simply to preserve something necessary to her.

"We must all live our own lives. We old people have no right to prey upon our children," she often said. And it was this conviction which made her, secretly, a little afraid of her grandchildren of whom her daughter sent her photographs—the daughter who, with the dead son, had been for many years the one absorption of the old lady's life. When she meditated upon the joys of maternity and the intimate relations of a family, the old lady became confused. In some manner, in spite of her devotion, her attitude toward her children had been an error, but an error which she would never be able to localize within her or describe to herself accurately. She only felt that such error, or its equivalent, must be common to all the world, and, in apologizing so constantly for herself, she apologized for others, too, and found that any emotion which was not pity had become incomprehensible to her. The most frightening thing of all was that pity itself required a defence, and her very desire to confess for herself and admit for others inadequacy, without condemning it, was the basis of her real apartness from her former life. She wanted to state all this intelligibly, but she had never been able to do so.

Her thoughts became lost again in the past, when her eyes filled with tears and the grief she had felt at her husband's death came back to her—not the grief she had experienced at the time, to which her health had succumbed while her reason was threatened, but another despair which was without any quality of protest and which she vainly attempted to unify with the emotions of twenty years before. She even tried to grieve more, but without success.

It was her present incapacity for strong passion which drove her, in her phantomlike existence, to dependence on routine, and the concrete regularity of meal hours had become as important to her as any critical event. In the vast dining-saloon with its glass front overlooking the water, she was punctual at one o'clock and at half-past seven, and, though her appetite was variable, she was always one of the last to leave the table. What nice young people those two in the corner were, the ones who were newly married, and what an excellent mamma was the stout woman of thirty with the little daughter. The old lady usually had some pleasant remark for the waiter who, good-humoured and polite, was ready to serve her immediately upon her entrance into the room, though he was somewhat perfunctory and reserved his most refined solicitude for persons who, not poorer than she was, were more difficult to please. She liked hot coffee that burned her withered lips, and Michel was careful to bring coffee steaming and perfumed, and she drank it on the terrace. Yet she bored him. There was nothing beyond her guessed-at fortune to supply material for scandals or invite interest.

She did not resent living alone, but she was often conscious of her lonely appearance and of what it might suggest to others. She wished, on that account, to exhibit an occupation. When she went to the writing-room or sat on the beach, she carried a book with her, turned over the pages carefully, and appreciated, perhaps, a paragraph of what she read, but many of the lines she perused might have been inscribed in some strange language as remote as a language of the Orient. Refusing to confront this incapacity to receive, mentally, the new impression, the secret of the universe was, to her, as if buried inscrutably in her own soul, and to be divulged—if ever—in a reconstructed understanding of what had happened to her, an understanding which included even

the most trivial incidents of former days. To have lived, loved, borne children, and grown old was to have known everything. Why could she find no words to make this meaning of intimate things intelligible to her fellow men? Because she could not speak and make herself heard, it was often as though, in living so fully, she had never lived. Her heart beat in a troubled way. Her hands, on the leaves of her book, trembled, and she resisted being sorry for herself. She tried to take comfort in a religion in which her faith was no longer orthodox, and ended, finally, with this great pity for the world which did not ask to be pitied and despised pity—pity which was—she sometimes doubtfully conjectured it—the reflection of her own weakness. Then the only recourse from these vague and half-comprehended thoughts was to consider a change to a new scene, a journey which would tax her strength, in which, in speaking to Françoise, the old lady would ridicule weakness and make light of it. Or she would rise from her deck-chair and walk in the sunshine along the beach.

The blue waters, angry and violent in the wind that flapped her skirts, suggested to her a darkness of night in which green fields are visible. The poetry of the comparison pleased her, as the image appeared unpremeditatedly from her mind, and was like a memory of youth. As she watched that steady onward movement of waters upon the land, she experienced what was to her, in this day, a rare moment, a moment of positive happiness.

Beyond the pier, where she walked, leaning on her stick, the sea surrounded the dripping rocks of a headland. The rocks were bronze-coloured and porous, like gutted and petrified combs of honey, left there by bees of a giant size. Above them, in jagged curtains of white foam, in the glow of the sun, the surf towered. For an instant the suspended curtain hung twinkling in the light, to descend, with the transience of dew and the indolence of a floating veil, upon the agitation of waves which had conveyed it. The surface of glass which was the ocean, voluminous and rocking, like the sun-inflamed canopy of a glass tent, washed up and down magnificently, somnolently, as a cradle gently rocked, and the enormous tents of water, built up one after another, were covered all over with globules of sunshine, round and crystal, trembling like the drops that fall hesitatingly from metal which, made over-warm, has begun to cool again.

Once more the foam concentrated in seething currents, rushing together with subterranean hisses. The foam concentrated, lifted, and made a glittering edifice of snow, harsh, exquisite, and momentary, like the Gothic traceries of frost. The tower of marble, of a lacy substance, of the purity of linen left long to bleach, but with the adamant glitter of diamonds, sank easily, waned in prismatic reflections, and was no more than a pale breath, breathed on the distance of the intense sky and evaporating like mist. Little water-spouts, such as pour from the gargoyle-mouths of old fountains, ran steadily downward from crevices in the stones. The tide rattled among the boulders. The sea had subsided, only to come forward as before, but with a more implacable ease. A glass tube, transparent on the length of the shore, showed, in a bottle-blue wall, ribbon-tangles of reddish seaweed, designed in the clear substance with the design of objects caught in amber. The swell, with its mounting undulations, resolved in long blades of crystal, run high in the air in a concave symmetry in which sank massive and transparent shadows that were the reflections of the waves themselves, carving the beaches.

The old lady's bonnet-strings whipped out under her chin, her wide black dress was full like a banner and beat her legs, yet, though she steadied herself against the onslaught of winds, felt salt vapours upon her face, and was obliged to squint and lower her wrinkled lids against the glare, she saw everything vividly. The foam, curdling the sands, sticky amber and smooth as mirrors, was a flat scallop, like a ruffle of soap-suds, and the scallops ran down corruscations and runnels that were the imprints of wavy hair, faintly golden. A cold smell of rotted fish and kelp came to the old lady on the same breeze that wafted to her the screams of the children, of the little boys in their striped bathing costumes who were wading in the shallows. And little girls in white, little girls, barefoot, with sandbuckets and shovels, their short skirts tilted behind their flying legs, were heard shrieking happily as they swooped, like a flock of small gulls, straight down to the water's edge. More obscurely, as from a more vast distance, the old lady heard the voices of the grown-up bathers, who, swimming far out into the breakers, were carried, with heads bobbing, to an immense height, lifted, by the indifferent sapphire waters, as upon the flashing shoulders of armoured giants.

Then she turned toward the sultry horizon, where the brilliance of the day succumbed to the overshadowing of clouds, and to something less visible—perhaps an emanation from the light itself—which was like unseen smoke. Beyond the cobalt welter of sun and waves, incessantly flaked as with white flowers, a boat balanced quietly under one sail, stood, upon the emptiness, like a swan upon a still lake, its head under its wing.

The old lady was fatigued by this unforeseen intensity of visual appreciation. She had come to the end of the pier, and, turning reluctantly, began to retrace her footsteps to the hotel. On the shore she noted the rosy and dusked loftiness of the retreating mountains, their peaks sombre under the fogs of a summer rainstorm, while on the rusted slopes the deep green of the trees suggested a relief of velvet on an old brocade, the crushed foliage of the pines and cork oaks hinting at the tactile qualities of variegated mosses. The fashionable hotels along the waterfront, built in stucco and somewhat in the Spanish style, ancient houses in the town with walls of plaster or rubble, all showed in a violent radiance of sinking sun in which the pallor of white surfaces and the redness of far-off roofs received a remote emphasis on objects which seemed the minute dwellings of dolls.

And the old lady was suddenly overcome by an emotion which she afterwards preferred to forget. What she felt, as she turned from her promenade, the sea-wind stinging her flaccid cheeks, was an immanence of death, which came to her from nowhere out of nothing—from the cries of the children, from the boat, the breeze, from the vast water that flowed after her. Yes, most of all from the sea, the sea flashing in the sunshine, the great sea, monotonous, voracious, untouched, and merciless. "I shall die," she thought, "but *they* will die, too." In "*they*" she included the people in the village, the bathers in the surf, and the ladies in their organdie frocks and flowered hats, with the gentlemen in flannels, gentlemen dressed so precisely, if carelessly, in imitations of the English style—the old lady, as she approached the termination of her walk, could now see them all. And the quiet gale that swept past her from some space infinitely distant, beyond even the clouds of the coming rainstorm, was the breath of a holocaust. "*They*" were all dead, all the people who covered the security of the land, people the old lady loved and had loved, indeed people who were

dead already. That the sea was, had been, and always would be—long, long after these, the young, the happy, the oblivious, had ceased to live—this sea, of which she herself was afraid, so that she had never undertaken an ocean voyage without a tremor, the sea comforted her with an immense and terrible comfort, so that, for an instant, her spirit flamed coldly and intensely. All was light, sunshine, happiness, and moving waters, and all was death, for ever and ever death—though she scarcely called it so exactly, or by that name.

Then her eyes grew dim. The peculiar accuracy with which, the moment before, she had viewed and absorbed the details of her surroundings, faded in her habitual hesitance and vagueness. She began to think of saving her strength, of getting back to the hotel in time for her tea when she would eat some nice little *brioches*, of buying Françoise a new dress. Entering the hotel lobby at just a quarter to five o'clock, weak and at peace as after some exhausting victory, she gave to her heart the shadowy acknowledgement of its new strength, and, in spite of her cheerful resolutions, was conscious of a faint, austere bitterness.

AS ONE INVULNERABLE

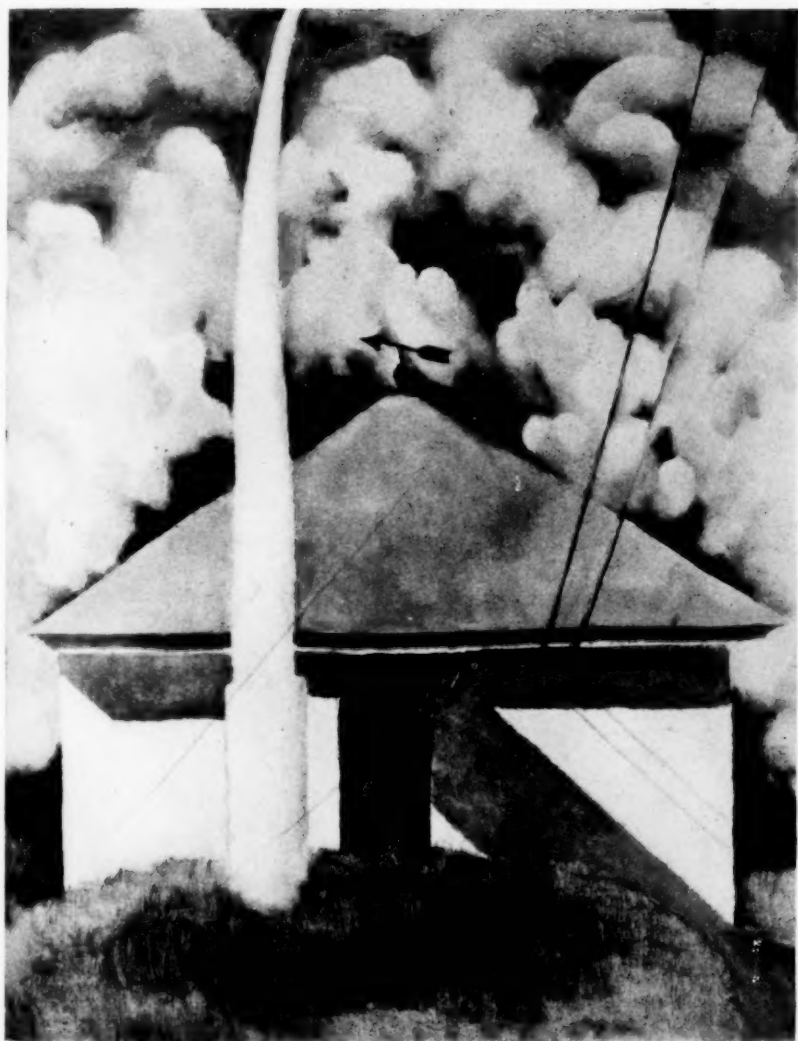
BY JESSICA NELSON NORTH

I knew a man who met to-morrow
With hard, indifferent repose—
Buttoned his coat about his sorrow
And walked unarmed among his foes.

(For foes he has and foes a-plenty
Who will not lay his wound apart,
And show the world for five and twenty
The crucifixion of his heart.)

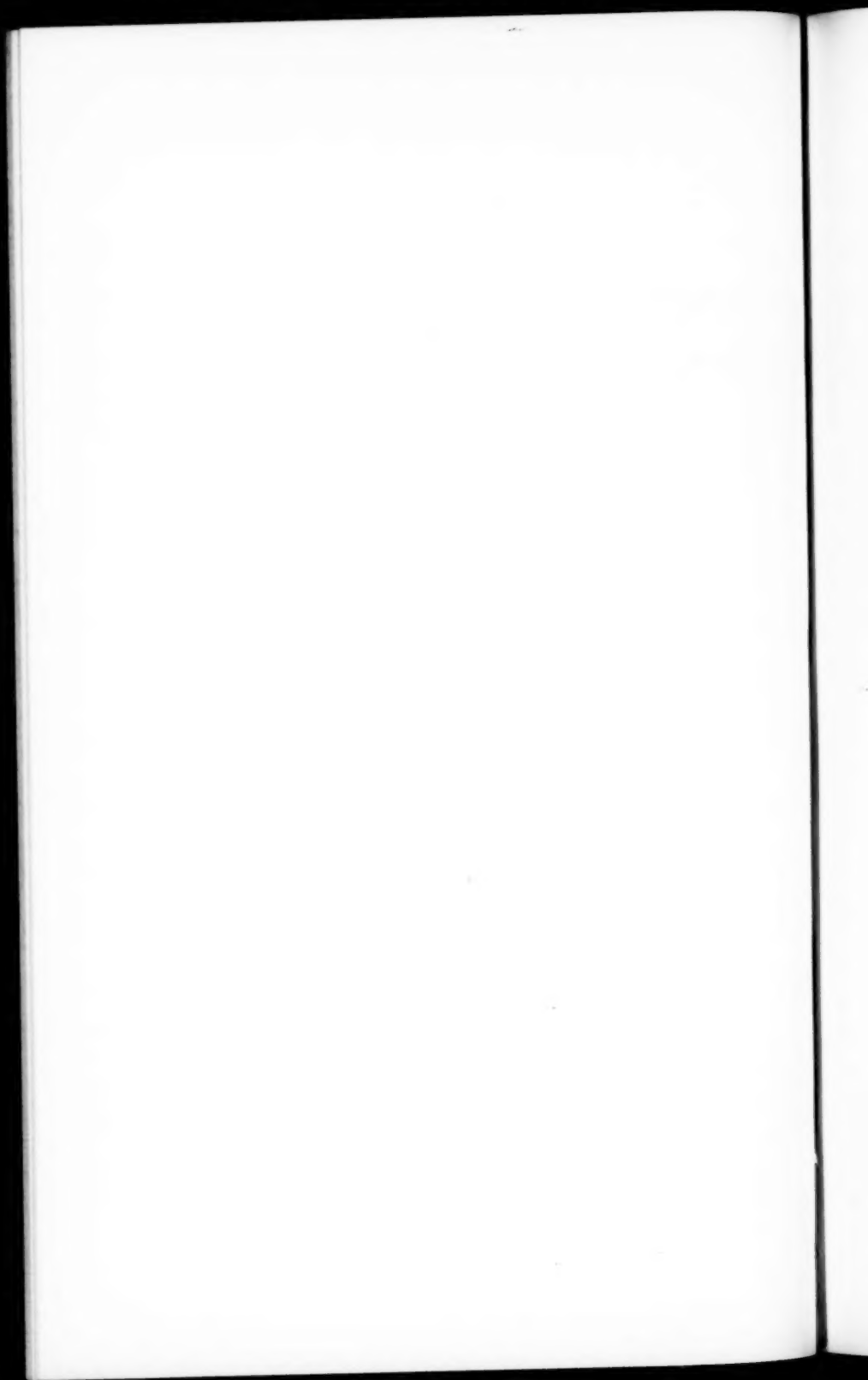
He stood at his deserted window
And would not set a candle there;
With dagger-pointed innuendo
The cheated public paused to stare,

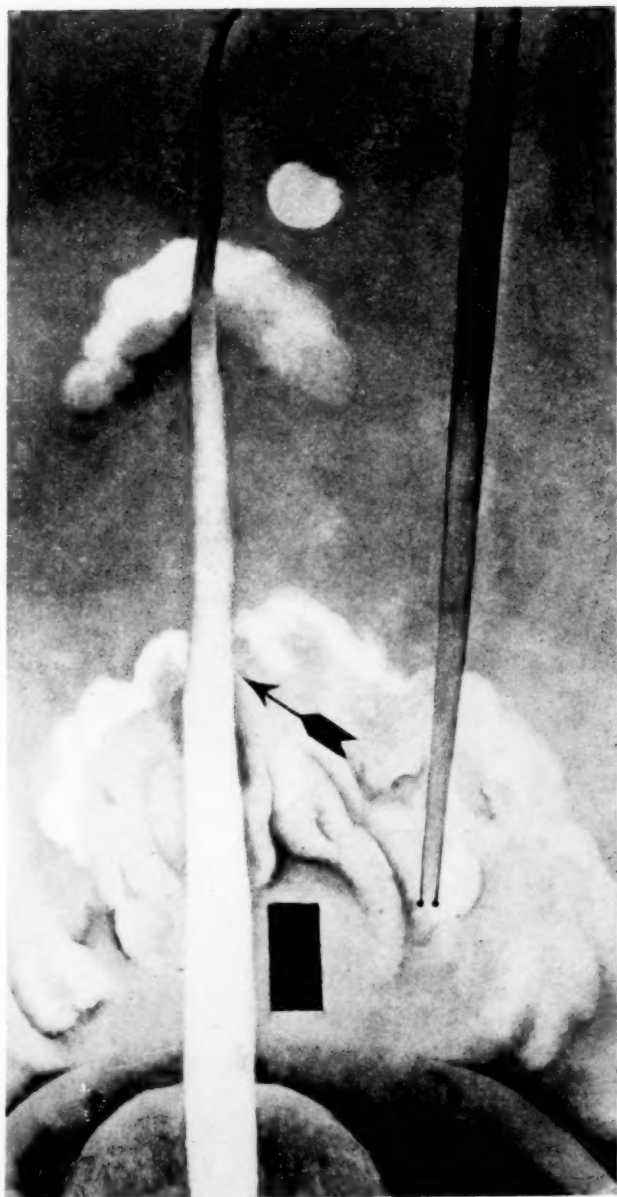
Or boldly thrusting, fled affrighted
Lest they do battle with a shade,
When through his sinews, unrequited,
Whistled the sharp, offensive blade.



Permission of Alfred Stieglitz

THE FLAGPOLE (FIRST PAINTING). BY GEORGIA O'KEEFFE





Collection of Sir Joseph Duveen

THE FLAGPOLE (SECOND PAINTING). BY GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

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THE LIVES OF THE OBSCURE

BY VIRGINIA WOOLF

LITTLE is now known of Laetitia Pilkington, and not all that is known is certainly true. Moreover, if one looks along the shelves upon which her three small volumes stand—*The Memoirs of Mrs Laetitia Pilkington*, wife to the Rev. Mr Matt. Pilkington, written by herself, Dublin M.DCC.LXX.VI.—there are other books of much greater importance than hers without going beyond the letter P—Pope, Peacock, possibly Pindar, to seek no further. Yet what a debt of gratitude we owe to her and her sort!—Not for what they did or for what they said, but for being themselves; for persisting, in spite of their invincible mediocrity, in writing their memoirs; for providing precisely that background, atmosphere, and standing of common earth which nourish people of greater importance and prevent them from shrivelling to dry sticks or congealing to splendid pinnacles of inaccessible ice. For imagine a literature composed entirely of good books; imagine having nothing to read but the plays of Shakespeare, the poems of Milton, the essays of Bacon, the letters of Madame de Sévigné, and the biography of Johnson. Starvation would soon ensue. No one would read at all. The difficult art, practised by a few heroic spirits whose singular genius withdrew them more and more into learned societies and the backwaters of college life, would become extinct; and writing would follow suit.

The great literatures of Greece and Rome, so much admired, but so seldom read, prove how difficult it is for good books to survive unless they are liberally supported by bad ones. The isolation is too great. There is nothing handy and personal to pull oneself up by. There are no gradations of merit, but we are faced directly by the sublime and precipitous—by Aeschylus, Sophocles, Lucretius, Plato, Virgil, Aristotle. There is no W. E. Norris; no Creevey; no *Indiscretions of a Countess*; no Mrs Pilkington. But such trivial ephemeral books do not merely break the ascent and encourage us to mightier efforts. They have a more important office. They are the dressing-rooms, the workshops, the wings,

the sculleries, the bubbling cauldrons, where life seethes and steams and is for ever on the boil. By sousing ourselves in memoirs we keep our minds supple, and so when at last we tackle the finished product—Hamlet for example—we bring to the understanding of him fertile minds imbued with ideas, at once creative and receptive. So we can never approach Ajax and Electra; and in consequence they are never taken into the depths of our beings, but remain always a little craggy, a little indissoluble, an inch or two beyond our grasp. For literature did undoubtedly once lie down with life, and all her progeny, being the result of that misalliance, are more or less impure. To understand them we must live. And then, since we are seeking excuses, who can say where life ends and literature begins? And then who can guide us? And then how delicious to ramble and explore!

One likes romantically to feel oneself a deliverer advancing with lights across the waste of years to the rescue of some stranded ghost—a Mrs Pilkington, a Rev. Henry Elman, a Miss Ann Gilbert—who has been waiting, appealing, forgotten in the growing gloom. Possibly they hear one coming. They shuffle; they preen; they bridle. Old secrets well up to the lips. The divine relief of communication will soon again be theirs. The dust shifts and Mrs Gilbert—but the contact with life is instantly salutary. Whatever Mrs Gilbert may be doing she is not thinking about us. Far from it. Colchester about the year 1800 was for the young Taylors as Kensington had been for their mother "a very Elysium." There were the Strutts, the Hills, the Stapletons; there was poetry, philosophy, engraving. For the young Taylors were brought up to work hard, and if, after a long day's toil upon their father's pictures, they slipped round to dine with the Strutts, they had a right to their pleasure. Already they had won prizes in Darton and Harvey's pocket-book. One of the Strutts knew James Montgomery, and there was talk at those gay parties with the Moorish decorations and all the cats, for old Ben Strutt was a bit of a character, did not communicate, would not let his daughters eat butchers' meat, so no wonder they died of consumption—there was talk of printing a joint volume to be called *The Associate Minstrels* to which James, if not Robert himself, might contribute. The Stapletons were poetical too. Moira and Bithia would wander over the old town wall at Balkerne Hill reading poetry by moon-

light. Perhaps there was a little too much poetry in Colchester in 1800. Looking back in the middle of a prosperous and vigorous life Ann had to lament many broken careers, much unfulfilled promise. The Stapletons died young, perverted, miserable; Jacob, with his "dark scorn-speaking countenance" who had vowed that he would spend the night looking for Ann's lost bracelet in the street, disappeared "and I last heard of him vegetating among the ruins of Rome—himself too much a ruin"; as for the Hills their fate was worst of all. To submit to public baptism was flighty; but to marry Captain M.! Anybody could have warned pretty Fanny Hill against Captain M. Yet off she drove with him in his fine phaeton. For years nothing more was heard of her. Then one night when the Taylors had moved to Ongar and old Mr and Mrs Taylor were sitting over the fire thinking how, as it was nine o'clock and the moon was full, they ought, according to their promise, to look at it and think of their absent children, there came a knock at the door. Mrs Taylor went down to open it. But who was this sad, shabby-looking woman outside? "Oh, don't you remember the Strutts and the Stapletons and how you warned me against Captain M.?" cried Fanny Hill, for it was Fanny Hill—poor Fanny Hill, dressed like a servant, all worn and sunk, poor Fanny Hill, that used to be so sprightly. She was living in a lone house not far from the Taylors, forced to drudge for her husband's mistress, for Captain M. had wasted all her fortune, ruined all her life.

Ann married Mr G. of course—of course. The words toll persistently through these obscure volumes. For in the vast world to which the memoir writers admit us there is a solemn sense of something unescapable, of a wave gathering beneath the frail flotilla and carrying it on. One thinks of Colchester in 1800. Scribbling verses, reading Montgomery—so they begin; the Hills, the Stapletons, the Strutts disperse and disappear as one knew they would; but here, after long years, is Ann still scribbling, and at last here is the poet Montgomery himself in her very house, and she begging him to consecrate her child to poetry by just holding him in his arms, and he refusing (for he is a bachelor) but taking her for a walk, and they hear the thunder, and she thinks it the artillery, and he says in a voice which she will never, never forget, "Yes! The artillery of Heaven!" Perhaps that is one of

the attractions of the unknown; their multitude, their vastness. For instead of keeping their identity separate, as remarkable people do, they seem to merge into one another, their very boards and title pages and frontispieces dissolving, and their innumerable pages melting into continuous years so that we can lie back and look up into the fine mist-like substance of countless lives and pass unhindered from century to century, from life to life. Scenes detach themselves. We watch groups. Here is young Mr Elman talking to Miss Biffen at Brighton. She has neither arms nor legs; a footman carries her in and out. She teaches miniature painting to his sister. Then he is in the stage-coach on the road to Oxford with Newman. Newman says nothing. Elman nevertheless reflects that he has "known all the great men of his time." And so back and so forwards he paces eternally the fields of Sussex, until, grown to an extreme old age, there he sits in his Rectory thinking of Newman, thinking of Miss Biffen, and making—it is his great consolation—string bags for missionaries. And then? Go on looking. Nothing much happens. But the dim light is exquisitely refreshing to the eyes. Let us watch little Miss Frend trotting along the Strand with her father. They meet a man with very bright eyes. "Mr Blake," says Mr Frend. It is Mrs Dyer who pours out tea for them in Cliffords Inn. Mr Charles Lamb has just left the room; but there is a peculiar feeling about rooms which Charles Lamb has just left. Mrs Dyer says she married George because his washerwoman cheated him so. "What do you think George paid for his shirts?" she asks. Gently, beautifully, like the cloud of a balmy evening, obscurity once more traverses the sky, an obscurity which is not empty, but thick with the star dust of innumerable lives. And suddenly there is a rift in it, and we see a wretched little packet boat pitching off the Irish coast, in the middle of the nineteenth century. For there is an unmistakable air of 1840 about the tarpaulins and the hairy monsters in sou'westers lurching and spitting over the sloping decks yet treating the solitary young woman who stands in shawl and poke bonnet, gazing, gazing, not without kindness. No, no, no! She will not leave the deck. She will stand there till it is quite dark thank you! "Her great love of the sea . . . drew this exemplary wife and mother every now and then irresistibly away from home. No one but her husband knew where she had gone, and her children learnt only later in life that on these occasions, when suddenly

she disappeared for a few days, she was taking a short sea voyage" . . . a crime which she expiated by months of hard work among the midland poor. Then the craving would come upon her, would be confessed in private to her husband, and off she stole again—the mother of Sir George Newnes.

One would conclude that human beings were happy; endowed with such blindness to fate, so indefatigable an interest in their own activities, were it not for those sudden and astonishing apparitions staring in at us, all taut and pale in their determination never to be forgotten, men who have just missed fame, men who have passionately desired redress—men like Haydon and Mark Pattison and the Rev. Blanco White. And in the whole world there is probably but one person who looks up for a moment and tries to interpret the menacing face, the furious beckoning fist before, in the multitude of human affairs, fragments of faces, echoes of voices, flying coat tails, and bonnet strings disappearing down shrubbery walks, his attention is distracted for ever. What is that enormous wheel, for example, careering downhill, in Berkshire, in the eighteenth century? It runs faster and faster; suddenly a youth jumps out from within; next moment it leaps over the edge of a chalk pit and is dashed to smithereens. This is Edgeworth's doing; Richard Lovell Edgeworth, we mean, the portentous bore.

For that is the way he has come down to us, Byron's bore, Day's friend, Maria's father, the man who almost invented the telegraph, and did, in fact, invent machines for cutting turnips, climbing walls, contracting on narrow bridges, and lifting their wheels over obstacles—a man meritorious, industrious, advanced, but still, as we investigate his memoirs, mainly a bore. Nature endowed him with irrepressible energy. The blood coursed through his veins at least twenty times faster than the normal rate. His face was red, round, vivacious. His brain raced. His tongue never stopped talking. He had married four wives and had nineteen children including the novelist Maria. Moreover he had known everyone and done everything. His energy burst open the most secret doors and penetrated the most private apartments. His wife's grandmother, for instance, disappeared mysteriously every day. Edgeworth blundered in upon her and found her with her white locks flowing and her eyes streaming in prayer before a crucifix. She was a Roman Catholic then, but why a penitent?

He found out somehow that her husband had been killed in a duel and she had married the man who killed him. "The consolations of religion are fully equal to its terrors," Dick Edgeworth reflected as he stumbled out again. Then there was the beautiful young woman in the castle among the forests of Dauphiny. Half paralysed, unable to speak above a whisper, there she lay when Edgeworth broke in and found her, reading. Tapestries flapped on the castle walls; fifty thousand bats—"odious animals whose stench is uncommonly noisome"—hung in clusters in the caves beneath. None of the inhabitants understood a word she said. But to the Englishman she talked, for hour after hour, about books and politics and religion. He listened; no doubt he talked. He sat dumbfounded. But what could one do for her? Alas, one must leave her lying among the tusks and the old men and the crossbows, reading, reading, reading. For Edgeworth was employed in turning the Rhone from its course. He must get back to his job. One reflection he would make. "I determined on steadily persevering in the cultivation of my understanding."

He was impervious to the romance of the situations in which he found himself. Every experience served only to fortify his character. He reflected, he observed, he improved himself daily. You can improve, Mr Edgeworth used to tell his children, every day of your life. "He used to say that with this power of improving they might in time be anything, and without it they would be nothing." Imperturbable, indefatigable, daily increasing in sturdy self-assurance, he has the gift of the egoist. He brings out, as he bustles and bangs on his way, the diffident shrinking figures who would otherwise be drowned in darkness. The aged lady whose private penance he disturbed is only one of a series of figures who start up on either side of his progress, mute, astonished, showing us in a way that is even now unmistakable their amazement at this well-meaning man who bursts in upon them at their studies and interrupts their prayers. We see him through their eyes; we see him as he does not dream of being seen. What a tyrant he was to his first wife! How intolerably she suffered! But she never utters a word. It is Dick Edgeworth who tells her story in complete ignorance that he is doing anything of the kind. "It was a singular trait of character in my wife," he observes, "who had never shown any uneasiness at my intimacy with Sir Francis Delaval that she should take a strong dislike to Mr Day. A more

dangerous and seductive companion than the one, or a more moral and improving companion than the other could not be found in England." It was indeed, very singular.

For the first Mrs Edgeworth was a penniless girl, the daughter of a ruined country gentleman who sat over his fire picking cinders from the hearth and throwing them into the grate while from time to time he ejaculated *Hein! Hein!* as yet another scheme for making his fortune came into his head. She had had no education. An itinerant writing master had taught her to form a few words. When Dick Edgeworth was an undergraduate and rode over from Oxford, she fell in love with him and married him in order to escape the poverty and the mystery and the dirt and to have a husband and children like other women. But with what result? Gigantic wheels ran downhill with the bricklayer's son inside them. Sailing carriages took flight and almost wrecked four stage-coaches. Machines did cut turnips, but not very efficiently. Her little boy was allowed to roam the country like a poor man's son, bare-legged, untaught. And Mr Day coming to breakfast and staying to dinner argued incessantly about scientific principles and the laws of nature. Here however we encounter one of the pitfalls of this nocturnal rambling among forgotten worthies. It is so difficult to keep, as we must with highly authenticated people, strictly to the facts. It is so difficult to refrain from making scenes which, if the past could be recalled, might perhaps be found lacking in accuracy. With a character like Thomas Day, in particular, whose history surpasses the bounds of the credible, we find ourselves oozing amazement like a sponge which has absorbed so much that it can retain no more, but fairly drips. Certain scenes have the fascination which belongs rather to the abundance of fiction than to the sobriety of fact. For instance we conjure up all the drama of poor Mrs Edgeworth's daily life; her bewilderment; her loneliness; her despair; how she must have wondered whether any one really wanted machines to climb walls; and assured the gentlemen that turnips were better cut simply with a knife; and so blundered and floundered and been snubbed that she dreaded the almost daily arrival of the tall young man with his pompous melancholy face, marked by the smallpox, his profusion of uncombed black hair, and his finical cleanliness of hands and person. He talked fast, fluently, incessantly, for hours at a time about philosophy and nature and M Rousseau. Yet it was her

house; she had to see to his meals, and, though he ate as though he were half asleep, his appetite was enormous. But it was no use complaining to her husband. Edgeworth said, "She lamented about trifles." He went on to say, "The lamenting of a female with whom we live does not render home delightful." And then, with his obtuse open-mindedness, he asked her what had she to complain of. Did he ever leave her long? In the five or six years of their married life he had slept from home not more than five or six times. Mr Day could corroborate that. Mr Day corroborated everything that Mr Edgeworth said. He egged him on with his experiments. He told him to leave his son without education. He cared not a rap what people said. In short, he was at the bottom of all the absurdities and extravagances which made Mrs Edgeworth's life a burden to her.

Yet let us choose another scene—one of the last that poor Mrs Edgeworth was to behold. She was returning from Lyons, and Mr Day was her escort. A more singular figure as he stood on the deck of the packet which took them to Dover, very tall, very upright, one finger in the breast of his coat, letting the wind blow his hair out, dressed absurdly, though in the height of the fashion, wild, romantic, yet at the same time authoritative and pompous, could scarcely be imagined; and this strange creature, who loathed women, was in charge of a lady who was about to become a mother; had adopted two orphan girls; and had set himself to win the hand of Miss Elizabeth Sneyd by standing between boards for six hours daily in order to learn to dance. Now he pointed his toe with rigid precision; then, waking from the congenial dream into which the dark clouds, the flying waters, and the shadow of England upon the horizon had thrown him, he rapped out an order in the smart, affected tones of a man of the world. The sailors stared, but they obeyed. There was something sincere about him, something proudly indifferent to what you thought, yes, something comforting and humane too, so that Mrs Edgeworth for her part was determined never to laugh at him again. But men were strange; life was difficult, and with a sigh of bewilderment, perhaps of relief, poor Mrs Edgeworth landed at Dover, was brought to bed of a daughter, and died.

Day meanwhile proceeded to Lichfield. Elizabeth Sneyd of course refused him—gave a great cry, people said, exclaimed that she had loved Day the blackguard, but hated Day the gentle-

man, and rushed from the room. And then, they said, a terrible thing happened. Mr Day in his rage bethought him of the orphan, Sabrina Sydney, whom he had bred to be his wife; visited her at Sutton Coldfield; flew into a passion at the sight of her; fired a pistol at her skirts, poured melted sealing wax over her arms, and boxed her ears. "No, I could never have done that," Mr Edgeworth used to say when people described the scene. And whenever, to the end of his life, he thought of Thomas Day, he fell silent. So great, so passionate, so inconsistent—his life had been a tragedy, and in thinking of his friend, the best friend he had ever had, Richard Edgeworth fell silent.

It is almost the only occasion upon which silence is recorded of him. To muse, to repent, to contemplate were foreign to his nature. His wife and friends and children are silhouetted with extreme vividness upon a broad disc of interminable chatter. Upon no other background could we realize so clearly the sharp fragment of his first wife, or the shades and depths which make up the character, at once humane and brutal, advanced and hide-bound, of the inconsistent philosopher, Thomas Day. But his power is not limited to people; landscapes, groups, societies seem, even as he describes them, to split off from him, to be projected away, so that we are able to run just ahead of him and anticipate his coming. They are brought out all the more vividly by the extreme incongruity which so often marks his comment and stamps his presence; they live with a peculiar beauty, fantastic, solemn, mysterious, in contrast with Edgeworth, who is none of these things. In particular he brings before us a garden in Cheshire, the garden of a parsonage, an ancient but commodious parsonage.

One pushed through a white gate and found oneself in a grass court, small but well kept, with roses growing in the hedges and grapes hanging from the walls. But what in the name of wonder were those objects in the middle of the grass plot? Through the dusk of an autumn evening there shone out an enormous white globe. Round it at various distances were others of different sizes—the planets, and their satellites, it seemed. But who could have placed them there, and why? The house was silent; the windows shut; nobody was stirring. Then, furtively peeping from behind a curtain, appeared for a second the face of an elderly man, handsome, dishevelled, distraught. It vanished.

In some mysterious way human beings inflict their own vagaries

upon nature. Moths and birds must have flitted more silently through that little garden; the roses must have hung their heads in silence. Then, booted and spurred, red-faced, goggle-eyed, garrulous, inquisitive, in burst Richard Lovell Edgeworth. He looked at the globes; he satisfied himself that they were of "accurate design and workmanlike construction." He knocked at the parsonage door. He knocked and knocked. No one came. At length, as his impatience was overcoming him, slowly the latch was undone, gradually the door was opened; a clergyman, neglected, unkempt, but still a gentleman stood before him. Edgeworth named himself, and they retired to a parlour littered with books and papers and valuable furniture now fallen to decay. At last, unable to control his curiosity any longer, Edgeworth asked what were the globes in the garden? Instantly the clergyman displayed extreme agitation. It was his son who had made them, he exclaimed, a boy of genius, a boy of the greatest industry, and of virtue and acquirements far beyond his age. But he had died. His wife had died. Edgeworth tried to turn the conversation, but in vain. The poor man rushed on, passionately, incoherently, about his son, his genius, his death. "It struck me that his grief had injured his understanding," said Edgeworth, and he was becoming more and more uncomfortable when the door opened and a girl of fourteen or fifteen entered with a tea tray in her hand and suddenly changed the course of his host's conversation. Indeed, she was beautiful; dressed in white, her nose a shade too prominent, perhaps—but no, her proportions were exquisitely right. "She is a scholar and an artist!" the clergyman exclaimed as she left the room. But why did she leave the room? If she was his daughter why did she not preside at the tea table? Was she his mistress? Who was she? And why was the house in this state of litter and decay? Why was the front door locked? Why was the clergyman apparently a prisoner and what was his secret story? Questions began to crowd into Edgeworth's head as he sat drinking his tea; but he could only shake his head and make one last reflection, "I feared that something was not right," as he shut the white wicket gate behind him, and left alone for ever in the untidy house among the planets and their satellites the mad clergyman and the lovely girl.

QUEEN GORMLAI

BY PADRAIC COLUM

Unseemly is the rag
That's for my back to-day;
Patched and double-patched,
The hodden on the grey.

Not fingers that e'er felt
Fine things within their hold,
Drew needles in and through,
And smoothed out the fold.

Here, here I am begrudged
Even the candle's light,
To put it on, the garb
That leaves me misbedight.

O skinflint woman, Mor,
Who knows that I speak true—
I had women once,
A queen's retinue!

Light of hand and apt,
And companionable:
Seven score women, Mor,
I had at my call.

A blue Norse hood had I
Watching the hardy turns,
And feats of Clann O'Neill—
We quaffed from goblet-horns.

A crimson cloak I wore,
When, with Niall the King,
I watched the horses race
At Limerick in the spring.

QUEEN GORMLAI

In Tara of King Niall
The gold was round the wine,
And I was given the cup—
A furze-bright dress was mine.

Now this old clout to wear
With root-like stitches through—
Not hands that worked for queens,
Nor fine things felt made you!

The bramble is no friend,
It pulls at me and drags;
This thorny ground is mine,
Where briars tear my rags.

MARIANNE MOORE

BY WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

THE best work is always neglected and there is no critic among the older men who has cared to champion the newer names from outside the battle. The established critic will not read. So it is that the present writers must turn interpreters of their own work. Even those who enjoy modern work are not always intelligent, but often seem at a loss to know the white marks from the black. But modernism is distressing to many who would at least tolerate it if they knew how. These individuals who cannot bear the necessary appearance of disorder in all immediacy, could be led to appreciation through critical study.

If one come with Miss Moore's work to some wary friend and say, "Everything is worthless but the best and this is the best," adding, "—only with difficulty discerned," will he see anything, if he be at all well read, but destruction? From my experience he will be shocked and bewildered. He will perceive absolutely nothing except that his whole preconceived scheme of values has been ruined. And this is exactly what he should see, a break *through* all preconceptions of poetic form and mood and pace, a flaw, a crack in the bowl. It is this that one means when he says destruction and creation are simultaneous. But this is not easy to accept. Miss Moore, using the same material as all others before her, comes at it so effectively at a new angle as to throw out of fashion the classical-conventional poetry to which one is used and puts her own and that about her in its place. The old stops are discarded. This must antagonize many. Furthermore there is a multiplication, a quickening, a burrowing through, a blasting aside, a dynamization, a flight over—it is modern, but the critic must show that this is only to reveal an essential poetry through the mass, as always, and with superlative effect in this case.

A course in mathematics would not be wasted on a poet, or a

NOTE: Observations. By Marianne Moore. 12mo. 120 pages. Lincoln MacVeagh. The Dial Press. \$2.

reader of poetry, if he remembered no more from it than the geometric principle of the intersection of loci: from all angles lines converging and crossing establish points. He might carry it further and say in his imagination, that apprehension perforates, at places, through to understanding—as white is at the intersection of blue and green and yellow and red. It is this white light that is the background of all good work. Aware of this one may read the Greeks or the Elizabethans or Sidney Lanier, even Robert Bridges, and preserve interest, poise, and enjoyment. He may visit Virginia or China, and when friends, eager to please, playfully lead him about for pockets of local colour—he may go. Local colour is not, as the parodists, the localists believe, an object of art. It is merely a variant serving to locate some point of white penetration. The intensification of desire toward this purity is the modern variant. It is that which interests me most and seems most solid among the qualities I witness in my contemporaries; it is a quality present in much or even all that Miss Moore does.

Poems, like paintings, can be interesting because of the subject with which they deal. The baby glove of a Pharaoh can be so presented as to bring tears to the eyes. And it need not be bad work because it has to do with a favourite cat dead. Poetry, rare and never willingly recognized, only its accidental colours make it tolerable to most. If it be of a red colouration those who like red will follow and be led restfully astray. So it is with hymns, battle songs, love ditties, elegies. Humanity sees itself in them, sees with delight this, that, and the other quality with which it is familiar, the good placed attractively and the bad thrown into a counter light. This is inevitable. But in any anthology it will be found that men have been hard put to it at all times to tell which is poetry and which the impost. This is hard. The difficult thing to realize is that the thrust must go through to the white, at least somewhere.

Good modern work, far from being the fragmentary, neurotic thing its disunderstanders think it, is nothing more than work compelled by these conditions. It is a multiplication of impulses that by their several flights, crossing at all eccentric angles, *might* enlighten. As a phase, in its slightest beginning, it is not yet nearly complete. And it is not rising as an arc; it is more a disc pierced here and there by light; it is really distressingly broken

up. But so does any attack seem at the moment of engagement, multiple units crazy except when viewed as a whole.

Surely there is no poetry so active as that of to-day, so unbound, so dangerous to the mass of mediocrity, if one should understand it, so fleet, hard to capture, so delightful to pursue. It is clarifying in its movements as a wild animal whose walk corrects that of men. Who shall separate the good Whitman from the bad, the dreadful New England maunderers from the others, put air under and around the living and leave the dead to fall dead? Who? None but poems, such as Miss Moore's, their cleanliness, lack of cement, clarity, gentleness. It grows impossible for the eye to rest long upon the object of the drawing. Here is an escape from the old dilemma. The unessential is put rapidly aside as the eye searches between for illumination. Miss Moore undertakes in her work to separate the poetry from the subject entirely—like all the moderns. In this she has been rarely successful and this is important.

Unlike the painters the poet has not resorted to distortions or the abstract in form. Miss Moore accomplishes a like result by rapidity of movement. A poem such as *Marriage* is an anthology of transit. It is a pleasure that can be held firm only by moving rapidly from one thing to the next. It gives the impression of a passage *through*. There is a distaste for lingering, as in Emily Dickinson. As in Emily Dickinson there is too a fastidious precision of thought where unrhymes fill the purpose better than rhymes. There is a swiftness impaling beauty, but no impatience as in so much present-day trouble with verse. It is a rapidity too swift for touch, a seraphic quality, one might have said yesterday. There is, however, no breast that warms the bars of heaven; it is at most a swiftness that passes without repugnance from thing to thing.

The only help I ever got from Miss Moore toward the understanding of her verse was that she despised connectives. Any other assistance would have been an impoliteness, since she has always been sure of herself if not of others. The complete poem is there waiting: all the wit, the colour, the constructive ability (not a particularly strong point that however). And the quality of satisfaction gathered from reading her is that one may seek long in those exciting mazes sure of coming out at the right door in the end. There is nothing missing but the connectives.

The thought is compact, accurate, and accurately planted. In

fact the garden, since it is a garden more than a statue, is found to be curiously of porcelain. It is the mythical, indestructible garden of pleasure, perhaps greatly pressed for space to-day, but there and intact, nevertheless.

I don't know where, except in modern poetry, this quality of the brittle, highly set off porcelain garden exists and nowhere in modern work better than with Miss Moore. It is this chief beauty of to-day, this hard crest to nature, that makes the best present work with its "unnatural" appearance seem so thoroughly gratuitous, so difficult to explain, and so doubly a treasure of seclusion. It is the white of a clarity beyond the facts.

There is in the newer work a perfectly definite handling of the materials with a given intention to relate them in a certain way—a handling that is intensely, intentionally selective. There is a definite place where the matters of the day may meet if they choose or not, but if they assemble it must be there. There is no compromise. Miss Moore never falls from the place inhabited by poems. It is hard to give an illustration of this from her work because it is everywhere. One must be careful, though, not to understand this as a mystical support, a danger we are skirting safely, I hope, in our time.

Poe in his most read first essay quotes Nathaniel Willis' poem, *The Two Women*, admiringly and in full and one senses at once the reason: there is a quality to the *feeling* there that affected Poe tremendously. This mystical quality that endeared Poe to Father Tabb the poet-priest, still seems to many the essence of poetry itself. It would be idle to name many who have been happily mystical and remained good poets: Poe, Blake, Francis Thompson, et cetera.

But what I wish to point is that there need be no stilled and archaic heaven, no ducking under religiosities to have poetry and to have it stand in its place beyond "nature." Poems have a separate existence uncompelled by nature or the supernatural. There is a "special" place which poems, as all works of art, must occupy, but it is quite definitely the same as that where bricks or coloured threads are handled.

In painting, Ingres realized the essentiality of drawing and each perfect part seemed to float free from his work, by itself. There is much in this that applies beautifully to Miss Moore. It



MARIANNE MOORE. BY MARGUERITE ZORACH

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is perfect drawing that attains to a separate existence which might, if it please, be called mystical, but is in fact no more than the practicability of design.

To Miss Moore an apple remains an apple whether it be in Eden or the fruit bowl where it curls. But that would be hard to prove—

“dazzled by the apple.”

The apple is left there, suspended. One is not made to feel that as an apple it has anything particularly to do with poetry or that as such it needs special treatment; one goes on. Because of this the direct object does seem unaffected. It seems as free from the smears of mystery, as pliant, as “natural” as Venus on the wave. Because of this her work is never indecorous as where nature is itself concerned. These are great virtues.

Without effort Miss Moore encounters the affairs which concern her as one would naturally in reading or upon a walk outdoors. She is not a Swinburne stumbling to music, but one always finds her moving forward ably, in thought, unimpeded by a rhythm. Her own rhythm is particularly revealing. It does not interfere with her progress; it is the movement of the animal, it does not put itself first and ask the other to follow.

Nor is “thought” the thing that she contends with. Miss Moore uses the thought most interestingly and wonderfully to my mind. I don’t know but that this technical excellence is one of the greatest pleasures I get from her. She occupies the thought to its end, and goes on—without connectives. To me this is thrilling. The essence is not broken, nothing is injured. It is a kind hand to a merciless mind at home in the thought as in the cruder image. In the best modern verse room has been made for the best of modern thought and Miss Moore thinks straight.

Only the most modern work has attempted to do without *ex machina* props of all sorts, without rhyme, assonance, the feudal master beat, the excuse of “nature,” of the spirit, mysticism, religiosity, “love,” “humour,” “death.” Work such as Miss Moore’s holds its bloom to-day not by using slang, not by its moral abandon or puritanical steadfastness, but by the aesthetic pleasure engendered where pure craftsmanship joins hard surfaces skilfully.

Poetry has taken many disguises which by cross reading or intense penetration it is possible to go through to the core. Through intersection of loci their multiplicity may become revelatory. The significance of much reading being that this "thing" grow clearer, remain fresh, be more present to the mind. To read more thoroughly than this is idleness: a common classroom absurdity.

One may agree tentatively with Glenway Wescott, that there is a division taking place in America between a proletarian art, full of sincerities, on the one side and an aristocratic and ritualistic art on the other. One may agree, but it is necessary to scrutinize such a statement carefully.

There cannot be two arts of poetry really. There is weight and there is disencumberedness. There can be no schism, except that which has always existed between art and its approaches. There cannot be a proletarian art—even among savages. There is a proletarian taste. To have achieved an organization even of that is to have escaped it.

And to organize into a pattern is also, true enough, to "approach the conditions of ritual." But here I would again go slow. I see only escape from the conditions of ritual in Miss Moore's work: a rush through wind if not toward some patent "end" at least away from pursuit, a pursuit perhaps by ritual. If from such a flight a ritual results it is more the care of those who follow than of the one who leads. "Ritual," too often to suit my ear, connotes a stereotyped mode of procedure from which pleasure has passed, whereas the poetry, to which my attention clings, if it ever knew those conditions, is distinguished only as it leaves them behind.

It is at least amusing, in this connexion, to quote from *Others*, Volume 1, Number 5, November 1915—quoted in turn from J. B. Kerfoot in *Life*: "Perhaps you are unfamiliar with this 'new poetry' that is called 'revolutionary.' . . . It is the expression of a democracy of feeling rebelling against an aristocracy of form."

"As if a death mask ever could replace
Life's faulty excellence!"

There are two elements essential to Miss Moore's scheme of composition: the hard and unaffected concept of the apple itself as an idea, then its edge to edge contact with the things which

surround it—the coil of a snake, leaves at various depths, or as it may be; and without connectives unless it be poetry, the inevitable connective, if you will.

Marriage, through which thought does not penetrate, appeared to Miss Moore a legitimate object for art, an art that would not halt from using thought about it, however, as it might want to. Against marriage, “this institution, perhaps one should say enterprise—” Miss Moore launched her thought not to have it appear arsenaled as in a text book on psychology, but to stay among apples and giraffes in a poem. The interstices for the light and not the interstitial web of the thought concerned her, or so it seems to me. Thus the material is as the handling: the thought, the word, the rhythm—all in the style. The effect is in the penetration of the light itself, how much, how little; the appearance of the luminous background.

Of marriage there is no solution in the poem and no attempt at a solution; nor is there an attempt to shirk thought about it, to make marriage beautiful or otherwise by “poetic” treatment. There is beauty and it is thoughtless, as marriage or a cave inhabited by the sounds and colours of waves, as in the time of prismatic colour, as England with its baby rivers, as G. B. Shaw, or chanticleer, or a fish, or an elephant with its strictly practical appendages. All these things are inescapably caught in the beauty of Miss Moore’s passage through them; they all have at least edges. This too is a quality that greatly pleases me: definite objects which give a clear contour to her force. Is it a flight, a symphony, a ghost, a mathematic? The usual evasion is to call them poems.

Miss Moore gets great pleasure from wiping soiled words or cutting them clean out, removing the aureoles that have been pasted about them or taking them bodily from greasy contexts. For the compositions which Miss Moore intends, each word should first stand crystal clear with no attachments; not even an aroma. As a cross light upon this Miss Moore’s personal dislike for flowers that have both a satisfying appearance *and* an odour of perfume is worth noticing.

With Miss Moore a word is a word most when it is separated out by science, treated with acid to remove the smudges, washed, dried, and placed right side up on a clean surface. Now one may say that this is a word. Now it may be used, and how?

It may be used not to smear it again with thinking (the attach-

ments of thought) but in such a way that it will remain scrupulously itself, clean, perfect, unnicked beside other words in parade. There must be edges. This casts some light I think on the simplicity of design in much of Miss Moore's work. There must be recognizable edges against the ground which cannot, as she might desire it, be left entirely white. Prose would be all black, a complete block, painted or etched over, but solid.

There is almost no overlaying at all. The effect is of every object sufficiently uncovered to be easily recognizable. This simplicity, with the light coming through from between the perfectly plain masses, is however extremely bewildering to one who has been accustomed to look at the usual "poem," the commonplace opaque board covered with vain curlicues. They forget, those who would read Miss Moore aright, that white circular discs grouped closely edge to edge upon a dark table make black six-pointed stars.

The "useful result" is an accuracy to which this simplicity of design greatly adds. The effect is for the effect to remain "true"; nothing loses its identity because of the composition, but the parts in their assembly remain quite as "natural" as before they were gathered. There is no "sentiment"; the softening effect of word upon word is nil; everything is in the style. To make this ten times evident is Miss Moore's constant care. There seems to be almost too great a wish to be transparent and it is here if anywhere that Miss Moore's later work will show a change, I think.

The general effect is of a rise through the humanities, the sciences, without evading "thought," through anything (if not everything) of the best of modern life; taking whatever there is as it comes, using it and leaving it drained of its pleasure, but otherwise undamaged. Miss Moore does not compromise science with poetry. In this again she is ably modern.

And from this clarity, this acid cleansing, this unblinking willingness, her poems result, a true modern crystallization, the fine essence of to-day which I have spoken of as the porcelain garden.

Or one will think a little of primitive masonry, the units unglued and as in the greatest early constructions unstandardized.

In such work as Critics and Connoisseurs, and Poetry, Miss Moore succeeds in having the "thing" which is her concern move

freely, unencumbered by the images or the difficulties of thought. In such work there is no "suggestiveness," no tiresome "subtlety" of trend to be heavily followed, no painstaking refinement of sentiment. There is surely a choice evident in all her work, a very definite quality of choice in her material, a thinness perhaps, but a very welcome and no little surprising absence of moral tone. The choice being entirely natural and completely arbitrary is not in the least offensive, in fact it has been turned curiously to advantage throughout.

From what I have read it was in Critics and Connoisseurs that the successful method used later began first to appear: If a thought presents itself the force moves through it easily and completely: so the thought also has revealed the "thing"—that is all. The thought is used exactly as the apple, it is the same insoluble block. In Miss Moore's work the purely stated idea has an edge exactly like a fruit or a tree or a serpent.

To use anything: rhyme, thought, colour, apple, verb—so as to illumine it, is the modern prerogative; a stintless inclusion. It is Miss Moore's success.

The diction, the phrase construction, is unaffected. To use a "poetic" inversion of language, or even such a special posture of speech, still discernible in Miss Moore's earlier work, is to confess an inability to have penetrated with poetry some crevice of understanding; that special things and special places are reserved for art, that it is unable, that it requires fostering. This is unbearable.

Poetry is not limited in that way. It need not say either

Bound without.

Boundless within.

It has as little to do with the soul as with ermine robes or graveyards. It is not noble, sad, funny. It is poetry. It is free. It is escapeless. It goes where it will. It is in danger; escapes if it can.

This is new! The quality is not new, but the freedom is new, the unbridled leap.

The dangers are thereby multiplied—but the clarity is increased. Nothing but the perfect and the clear.

THE FOOLISH BUTTERFLY

By LIAM O'FLAHERTY

LIFE came to the butterfly when the sun was a golden ball in the East. It crawled on moist unsteady legs from the chrysalis on to the stem of the twig. It stood there, slightly swaying, while the sun and wind dried its body. The sun's rays came to it over the sea, bearing a cool heat that was scented with the fresh morning breeze. The light caresses of the breeze polished the butterfly's long trunk and loosened the large wings that were folded like a fan. The sun's heat dried and warmed it and caused it to swell out and pulsate with the joy of newborn life.

Scarcely had it completed the act of birth when its wings unfolded and spread themselves on the air, giddily rocking at first from side to side to find their balance and then falling gracefully outwards and downwards into position. They were so large and resplendent that the trunk was hidden beneath their awning. They were all decked with colour too, so that it was hard to see what part of them was white and what part was covered with black rings that seemed to multiply before the eyes rapidly. Yet all of the two wings looked white in some strange manner. It stood there on the twig, with its wings spread, full-grown and beautiful at birth, without a sound, either of joy or of pain, to disturb the silent beauty of its mysterious creation. A godly thing.

It rose without effort from the twig, daintily stepping on to the invisible support of the air without a single sound. Not a cry, not a whisper of wings broke the amazing silence of its existence. Its wings spread on the breeze and flapped innumerable times gracefully, up and down, in leaps and bounds, as if they were playing on some instrument, jumping from key to key in an abandoned way. Gambolling like a thing tossed in a whirlwind, it rose high into the air and then fell away into the valley.

The valley was small and round and opened on a pebbly shore, with the sea stretching beyond. On the other sides there were low but sheer cliffs, their slopes covered with long grass and

bushes, gorse and bracken. Everywhere there were little tiny flowers. Birds flitted about, little ones among the bushes and great seagulls soaring in the empty blue sky. Innumerable forms of life roamed in the grass and the accumulated sounds of their existence rose in a sleepy hum on the air. And round about, everywhere, fluttering and bobbing and curvetting, the butterfly beheld thousands of other butterflies like itself, all differing in colour or size, but all silent and beautiful and skipping about without rest. It joined the hurrying throng of butterflies, passing from flower to flower, drinking their sap. It rested now and again under the brilliant heat of the sun. It played with other butterflies. But above all, it liked to fly and flutter in the beautiful empty air, ever moving its glittering wings in throbbing flight, up, up into the wind with a sudden leap, down to the earth in zigzag course, and away again sideways, in and out, as if it followed an interminable maze of alleyways through the firmament.

A little after noon the butterfly wandered down to the edge of the strand, where there was a cluster of scarlet pimpernels growing. It hovered about the flowers a little and then rested among them. The sun was very hot. It beat down on the hot pebbles and on the great expanse of the calm sea, that shone white under its rays. Then suddenly a fresh wind started up from the direction of the land. It was a soft fresh wind and it blew in long slow rushes. It made the heads of the scarlet flowers, on one of which the butterfly rested, lean far over, like children bowing low all together. It excited the butterfly. It rose immediately into the air. It took three long zigzag leaps upward, high into the heavens and then it let itself be carried with the wind, revelling in the delicious pressure of the wind against its trunk and wings. Soon it soared out over the sea leaving the land behind. It soared a long way, flapping its wings gently and gliding before the generous impulse of the ever constant long sweeping rushes of the winds. It glided away, almost asleep with the pleasure of facile and rapid movement. Then with a sudden rapid and intricate series of wing movements, it drew itself downwards out of the course of the wind, to earth as it thought.

But there was no earth beneath it. Instead it beheld an amazing level plain, moving continually, with innumerable little waves on

its surface, with their crests silvered by the light of the sun and their sides deep blue. While here and there were black patches and light green patches, and again little flecks of froth that sparkled. The butterfly thought these sparkling things were flowers and it darted down towards one of them, but when it hovered near, it did not detect the smell of flower sap, but a strong pungent smell that was unknown to it and repulsive. Then a drop of water thrown up by the concussion of two wavelets struck it in the trunk and it rose quickly, terrified. It rose far up from the sea and flew again into the wind, letting itself be carried speedily away from the strange place that was repulsive to it. Rejoicing once more in the wind and the heat and light of the sun it forgot its terror.

All trace of land had now disappeared. The sea was encircled by the sky on all sides, the sea a level blue plain, the sky a painted cup lying mouth downwards on the sea. And the little white butterfly, a solitary prisoner beneath that boundless cup, flew on before the wind, flitting gaily on its resplendent wings.

In a kind of languorous ecstasy it flew until the wind suddenly went down and a great calm enveloped the back of the sea and the empty air above it. The butterfly's wings grew weak and it fluttered downwards suddenly, again seeking a resting place and the refreshing sap of some flower to invigorate it.

But again that moving plain with its pungent odour and its continual murmur repelled the butterfly. It rose, once more, terrified. But now it did not rise far. Its strength was waning. It was drawn downwards again. Again it skimmed the surface of the sea with the curved end of its trunk. Again it rose. It performed a frenzied series of little jumps, tossing itself restlessly on the heated air, exhausting the last reserves of its strength in a mad flutter of its beautiful white wings. Then it sank slowly in spite of fierce flapping. The wings drooped, swaying as they had done at the moment of birth when they had come from the chrysalis. The trunk touched the crest of the sea. It sank into the water. The wings fluttered once and then the sea-water filtered through them, like ink through blotting-paper.

There were a few little movements of the round head. Then the butterfly lay still.

LONDON LETTER

April, 1925

WE begin life by taking every gosling for a swan, and end it by taking every cygnet for a goose: the last state is worse than the first. Somehow things seem rather stagnant here. New geniuses no longer keep popping up from the Obscure Pool, and the persons we talk about now are the same that we were talking about—more enthusiastically—five years ago. But it is not, I think, merely that I am five years older. The results of the war are beginning to be noticeable. Half a generation died, and the poems, the pictures, and the plays that I ought to be fanatically signalling to you were most of them aborted. Forced fruit, the work of the survivors, kept for a while the losses out of sight. Now the gap yawns. And it is rumoured that the awarders of the Hawthornden Prize (for which only writers under forty can qualify) had to juggle a little with the last winner's birth-certificate. Mr T. F. Powys, whom I consider the last interesting novelist to appear, is not a young man, and with the exception of Mr Sacheverell Sitwell, whose last book of poems, *The Thirteenth Caesar*, reveals an ear of quite remarkable delicacy, I can think of no English writer worth mentioning who is under thirty. In poetry, by the way, the influence of Mr T. S. Eliot is becoming very marked. Richard Aldington's *The Fool i' the Forest* and Nancy Cunard's *Parallax*, both frankly affected by *The Waste Land*, are the two recent poems which have given me the greatest pleasure. The second in particular is most moving, and I find myself increasingly inclined to value a poem above all by its power to move, a power which little contemporary poetry except Mr Eliot's seems to me to possess.

It is especially in comparison with Paris—now only three hours away—that London seems so stagnant. There literary and artistic movements generally are perpetually bubbling. The young writers form groups, found papers, give themselves fine names, break up in dissension and start again *da capo* with untiring energy and arrogance. Here we are content to *piétiner sur place*, each

kennelled in his separate writing-room. Viewed from Paris, London still slumbers in a Victorian complacency, and with our new Conservative Government, a Home Secretary who is an earnest Evangelical, and a Prime Minister who is cousin to Kipling and nephew to Burne-Jones, the possibility of Government encouragement to the Arts seems definitely gone. Which is, I believe, all to the good. Mr MacDonald went so far as to open an exhibition of contemporary French painting, and made an extremely intelligent speech, but what he thought of the Picassos and Braques remains obscure. In the Socialist scheme art, like every other activity evidently, must admit State encouragement—and control. A Labour Government might even provide us with a National Theatre: for which there is always a certain agitation, especially among those who have never been to France and seen such an institution at work. In some countries, it is true, good State-run theatres do exist. But in England the taste of public bodies is infallibly bad. A theatre for producing plays by Sir James Barrie does not need State encouragement; and if we had a National Theatre which gave intelligent productions of interesting plays, the blood of every taxpayer would not unnaturally boil. We are nothing if not democratic.

If any one really does want to understand England, I think no more enlightening book can be found than a short work recently published, *A Nineteenth Century Childhood*, by Mary MacCarthy.¹ The reaction against the Nineteenth Century is at present very strong. It seems an anomalous, incomprehensible period, a time of material progress and spiritual reaction, during which the most intelligent deserted reason and submitted to taboos against which even the Middle Ages would have revolted. We should be infinitely more at home, we feel, with Gibbon than with Macaulay, with Dryden or Reynolds than with Tennyson or Holman Hunt. But all except the youngest of us are children of the Nineteenth Century: and an understanding of it is made all the more important by the peculiar acuteness of the difference between this generation and the one that preceded it—a difference, I suspect, which each generation in turn has thought to be peculiarly acute. In the still unwritten history of taste, the Nineteenth Century will probably be divided into three periods, of which only

¹ Published in this country by Doubleday, Page and Company. \$2.

the second, extending roughly from the 'forties to the 'eighties will be called Victorian. Contemporary sensibility and taste are being formed by persons born during the third period, a period marked in the arts by the leaders of the Aesthetic and Decadent Movements, in fashion by the raffish baccarat-players and professional beauties with whom our modern Prince Hal surrounded himself. But though these now seem the characteristic figures of the 'nineties, the true Victorian atmosphere persisted in most circles: for that matter, it can still be discovered in remote rectories, old-fashioned country-houses, and some Masters' Lodges in the University of Oxford. Nowhere has this atmosphere been so beautifully caught as in these reminiscences of Mrs MacCarthy's. She writes with the delicacy so impalpable a subject demands, and with a sort of disingenuous detachment which I enormously admire. A daughter of the Vice-provost of Eton and his wife—a lady whose sweetly unrepressed personality has already become legendary—Miss Mary Warre-Cornish was brought up in a highly cultivated home. Good scholarship and good manners were properly esteemed, a magnolia-tree climbed up the yellow brick walls of the many-bedroomed house, and the dumpy dignified old Queen was to be seen driving through her park at Windsor a mile or so away. Distinguished visitors came and went, the daughters of the house sang *Lieder*, and their mother, in the intervals of her surprising conversation, read aloud from Ronsard, Sainte-Beuve, and Browning. (It is quite a mistake to think that the children of the 'nineties learnt their letters in *The Yellow Book*.) Sunday was observed with unbogoted carefulness, and calceolarias alternated with geraniums in the borders of the garden-beds. Many beliefs were taken for granted, certain questions could not be thought of, much less asked, and the decencies were instinctively preserved. With the Queen's funeral, Mrs MacCarthy closes her book. Could she be persuaded to continue it, how different the moral climate she describes would become. It is her contemporaries, coming for the most part from just such nice, comfortable, and cultured homes, who have called everything in question; who have required of the arts new forms; who have rejected the ethic that the great Victorian destroyers of doctrine left untouched; and who have refused to call anything good till they have found a good reason—or rationalization—for it.

To the success of the eminent Edwardians, Mr Wells, for instance, and Mr Arnold Bennett, their little Latin and less Greek greatly contributed. They produced not only telling pictures of life among the lower-middle classes, but brought widely open eyes to characteristics of the old culture to which those bred in it were blind. With most of the prominent figures of the succeeding generation, the case is different. (Mr Lawrence is the most obvious exception.) Their interest in experiment comes from their being so much, instead of so little, saturated in traditional art. And the result is sophisticated work the fineness of which is apt to be paid for by a certain lack of punch. Mrs Woolf, Mr Duncan Grant, and Mr Lytton Strachey, each of them in my opinion the best exponent in England of the art he or she practises, are all examples of this. Having myself enjoyed a University education—and I enjoyed it immensely—I am entirely in sympathy with their condition, and when faced, say, with Mr Lawrence's farouche imaginings, I dislike even while I admire. The contest between the two conditions and their resulting attitudes is becoming marked, even in the newspapers. On the one hand we have *The Nation* and *The Athenæum*, with Mr Leonard Woolf as its literary editor, Mr Maynard Keynes as its economist, Mr Francis Birrell as its dramatic critic, and Mr Roger Fry, Mr Clive Bell, and Mr Richard Aldington among its contributors. On the other, *The Adelphi*, with Mr Middleton Murry as its editor, and Mr Lawrence as its most important writer. The conflict is between good sense and mysticism, between sceptics and the would-be founders of a new religion, between the tradition of Voltaire and that of Dostoevsky. *The Adelphi*, I may add, does not appear to be very successful. But it began most prosperously, and no one knows on which side of the fence the new generation will mostly fall.

For very soon the existence of a new generation must make itself felt. There is a gulf fixed between those who were of military age during the War, and those who had not left school at its conclusion. The latter generation, without the abnormal circumstances to force it to precocity, has not yet expressed itself. It is conceivable, that when it does, it will react violently against the disabused, appreciative, intellectualist temper which distinguishes so many of those, who like myself, were born between

1880 and 1895. A belief in violence may appear in those who have not known in person its devastating effects; a persuasion that art should satisfy the crowd, in those who have not seen the crowd let loose by panic; and a prejudice in favour of Victorian ethics in those who have not suffered from the results of their irrationality. The newspapers are full of the insecure condition of St Paul's Cathedral and Waterloo Bridge, in my opinion the two most entirely satisfactory works of architecture in London. The first will be saved if money can save it. As a symbol of religion or of London's dignity, it appeals to those whom aesthetic value leaves indifferent. Waterloo Bridge, being merely beautiful, is in graver danger, and will probably be destroyed. Even if the new buildings which since the War have been changing the appearance of the West End were as good as those they have replaced, our loss would be great. But almost always they are horrible. We live in an age of some interesting music and much intelligent literature, of great painting and utterly debased architecture. In Northern Europe exist some tolerable buildings which are also contemporary: and New York, as I can see from photographs, possesses what you, Mr Editor, once described to me as "a distinguished profile." But though I do not doubt that your architects are on the whole better than ours (the best modern building in London, Bush House, is the work of an American) they incline, I understand, to spoil their good designs by intruding upon them detail, now meaningless, imitated from the past. The tower-like buildings, for which, I suspect, your physical conditions rather than the genius of your architects, are responsible, make probably the nearest approach to great architecture that the present age knows. Here we are not allowed them, and the decadence of the art is desperately apparent. Our architects speak in a dead language, and the rare occasions when they cease to imitate only serve to expose their incompetence. The younger generation of them have better taste than their predecessors: they perceive that Georgian is a better style to crib from than Gothic: but at best they only produce pretty and scholarly pastiche. Apart from certain factories, the beauties of which are chiefly accidental, I know of no work by a living English architect which could conceivably command the enthusiasm of posterity. Mr Wyndham Lewis in his excellent pamphlet, *The Caliph's Design*, asked "Architects,

where is your Vortex?" I have forgotten exactly what a Vortex was supposed to be, but in any case the question was rhetorical. Our architects have either no impulse to express the better sensibility of the age in which they live, or else no idea how to set about doing so. "Art," said Gilbert to Sullivan's accompaniment, "Art stopped short, At the cultivated court, Of the Empress Josephine." Of the art of architecture—and of the kindred art of furniture designing—alone is this true. For a hundred years there has been nothing. To explain the fact it is not enough to urge that architecture mirrors more closely and entirely than the other arts the general, as opposed to an educated, taste. The trouble, I believe, is that there has not appeared for a century an architect of genius. Architecture has not had a Cézanne or a Wagner, much less a Picasso or a Strawinsky. And the greatest contribution England could make to aesthetic civilization would be to produce not so much a new Shakespeare as a new Christopher Wren.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

BOOK REVIEWS

BEYOND MUSICAL CRITICISM

MUSICAL CHRONICLE (1917-1923). By Paul Rosenfeld.
12mo. 314 pages. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$3.

A MUSICAL critic would probably approach Mr Paul Rosenfeld's *Musical Chronicle* as if it were a rehearsal for *The Day of Judgement*; and he would no doubt find himself writing another book, to express his exact shades of agreement and dissent. No wonder *Musical Chronicle* has waited a whole year for a review in *THE DIAL*, where many of these papers appeared; and no wonder, either, that it falls into the hands of a writer who, whatever his talents, has only a sparrow's competence in music. This would perhaps be a loss were it not for the fact that music, more fortunate than literature, has special schools and periodicals in which technical questions of musical composition can be threshed out by mature practitioners. Mr Rosenfeld brings to the criticism of music something more than the sensual ear: and it would be a stupid business to consider his essays as if they were related, in any dim degree, to those arid little interpretations that are written for symphony programmes.

In reading Mr Rosenfeld's *Musical Chronicle*, the main point of interest is not the piece of music itself: what concerns one is the juncture of the music with a complete and humane personality. Lacking fineness of understanding, lacking sensibility, lacking technical insight, impressionist criticism is often a mess of caprice; but when it possesses these things it is as near to rational judgement as we are able to go. In contrast, "objective" criticism too often confuses technical fulfilment with spiritual satisfaction: it tends to put the firm, well-centred movement of Webster's tragedies or Massinger's comedies above the splendid human sprawl of Shakespeare, and in attempting to rule out the critic's personality it really gives sanction to a less complete and less fruitful kind of personality. Mr Rosenfeld has the qualities that ballast impressionist criticism and bring it bravely to port: his

sympathies, his aversions, his enthusiasms, even his occasional petulances are worth knowing, and in the presence of music they assume a consistent shape. It follows that the *Musical Chronicle* is in good part a spiritual history of our period, and, like the brief and abstract chronicles of hackneyed quotation, it shows in miniature the tumultuous whole.

He would be a deaf sparrow, indeed, who did not find within the range of Mr Rosenfeld's discourse on d'Indy and Bloch and Strawinsky and Bruckner the dawning of an aesthetic appreciation; and similarly, he would be a dull thrush or nightingale who did not enjoy, over and above Mr Rosenfeld's musical interpretation, something of the jolly wisdom Mr Rosenfeld brings to *Life*. The essays on Rolland and on a Patriotic Concert call back bitter tawdry memories of the days of glory; the discussion of Palestrina on Twenty-second Street carries the mind towards that anomalous episode in our history when it seemed as if the arts were moving spontaneously back to the people, not in canned and dehydrated forms, but in some organic stirring, as deep as priapic jazz itself. And how much more than Bach goes into Mr Rosenfeld's description of the Bethlehem Festival! One is tempted to quote whole passages, to show how deftly Mr Rosenfeld rounds out his own sensations and emotions, so that the reader listens to him, not as a disembodied spirit hearing the music of the spheres, but as a person with a medical history, a neighbour, a latchkey, a secret, in short, with all the impedimenta of our civilization. This description of a Strawinsky recital sounds a note Mr Rosenfeld knows how to elaborate:

"Certainly, the ugly infinitely significant music of a concertino is of a piece with the lives of the folk who listened to it that evening in Aeolian Hall. The place was more a unit during the performance of Strawinsky than it has almost ever been, at any other concert. Audience, performers, composition, the tasteless and vulgar decorations of the hall itself, were interwoven, interplaying, doing much the identical thing. . . . The drabness, the weariness, the joylessness of the music seemed to proceed out of the hundreds packed, as they are packed evening after evening into the rows of seats."

With our eagerness to see the outlines of a culture established

in America, the critic of music, literature, or painting is frequently in danger of losing his wits in praise of what is half-baked or almost authentic, or not too hopelessly derivative. It is so easy to prove that mediocre American artists are just as good as mediocre French, German, or Russian artists—and it is quite true! Mr Rosenfeld, for all his eagerness and warmth, is not afraid to say: not yet, not quite! There is, of course, a sense in which the most insignificant work of art is as great a miracle as the cat's kittens; nevertheless, the critic, instead of marvelling at nature's strange gifts, is often compelled to deny their relevance and to consign the work, like the kittens, to some hole of friendly oblivion. To be captious in this fashion is merely to demand maturity; and to be less than captious is a cruel form of humanitarianism. I cannot conceive of a composer or musician relaxing under the warm blanket of Mr Rosenfeld's criticism; and if he did, he would have occasion to regret it!

Mr Rosenfeld's style has so often irritated his critics that, before leaving the Musical Chronicle, I must affirm how good, and how (in the best sense) individual it is. I see no occasion to be irritated by his desire always to use the infinitive with its preposition, or by his sudden adjectives, his newly compounded nouns, or in the failure of his prose to duplicate the plodding beat of those grey syllables that drop in an even pall over our thoughts. When Mr Rosenfeld reminds words it is often with a great gain in colour and clearness. He can put a figure before one in a flash: "There is something in Mr Bodansky's long black frock-coat that resembles a concept." The test of a good style is in the closeness of its conformity with the thought and passion behind it; and Mr Rosenfeld's style, it seems to me, meets all his varying moods and perceptions—the ironic, the savage, the gracious, the exuberant, the bubbles of humour that rise to the surface, and the profundity that lurks turbidly below. His skill in extracting effects from the minutiae of experience sometimes tempts him to strain a point, or to bungle his major themes by unessential preliminaries: and occasionally one feels that the results might be happier if he would cut out some of the little things that *please him most*. But to imply that one reads Mr Rosenfeld despite the obstacles of his manner is mere anaemia of taste: if he offends by his vitality, it is only because he walks among the sick.

LEWIS MUMFORD

THE ORDEAL OF STANLEY HALL

LIFE AND CONFESSIONS OF A PSYCHOLOGIST. By G. Stanley Hall. 8vo. 622 pages. D. Appleton and Company. \$5.

STANLEY HALL was representative of so much that was contributory to the life of the latter part of the nineteenth century that his life story has an appeal at once intellectual and general. In addition to being president of a New England college which achieved for itself a unique distinction, and in addition to writing freshly and penetratingly in a variety of fields where psychology and pedagogy overlap, he lived a mental life of constant activity in remarkably close touch with the changing atmosphere and mood of the times. It is his endeavour in the *Life* to reflect the changes seen in a career which began in a hill town in western Massachusetts about 1840. And it affords a singularly interesting panorama view of a period which American novels have never immortalized so vividly as have the English writers the same years in their own country. There is, indeed, that genuinely narrative quality here which is close to the biographical novel in form and interest—including even the excursions into philosophizing and the sex interest which the Wellsian novels have made familiar.

Indeed, another comparison comes to mind which is suggestive, if not absolutely parallel. It is a comparison with Mark Twain's life—especially as discussed by Van Wyck Brooks¹ after Albert Bigelow Paine. Hall is a more integrated spirit, more effectual in a chosen direction. Yet over both lives spreads the heavy hand of a generation which restrains. Both tug at a leash—dumbly yet as vigorously as their respectable standing will allow. Both are indigenous characters, representative of American qualities common to their age. Stanley Hall has had his Ordeal also.

The early chapters of his *Life* seem like the viewing of an album of daguerreotype portraits. There is the prime solidity, the firm sense of character, and sturdy pioneer integrity which we

¹ *The Ordeal of Mark Twain*. By Van Wyck Brooks. 8vo. 267 pages. E. P. Dutton and Company. \$3.

have learned to associate with an earlier New England. The feeling is well conveyed that a certain never-to-be-defined vigour of personality was achieved in that period which at least in retrospect seems admirable in many features. But honesty of perception and record is Mr Hall's aim; and he is not reluctant to point out the restrictive, repressive influences of his early environment and schooling. In fact, although it is hardly fair to the well considered proportion of his story to state it flatly, it does nevertheless seem true that his self-consciousness in the field of sex is one of the strains to be noted as most insistent throughout the account, and most interestingly indicative of the cramping quality of the life he forced himself to live. His testimony regarding psychoanalysis while not exactly naïve is yet not the utterance one would expect from the modern psychologist.

It will be remembered to his great credit in this connexion that Mr Hall was responsible as early as 1909 for bringing to these shores Professors Freud, Jung, and Ferenzi, for a notable convention of psychologists at Worcester. And as founder and editor of the *Journal of Applied Psychology* he gave hospitable reception to discussions in the field of psychoanalysis long before other learned journals mentioned the topic. Nor will the student of psychoanalysis miss the significance of the fact that at one time Mr Hall was President of the New England Watch and Ward Society—the New England counterpart of the similar organization over which Mr John Sumner presides so effectively in New York! His interest in sex was constant, and one gathers that the period of satisfying his interest by organized efforts to suppress immoral conduct of all sorts gave way to a more detached view.

The author is more frank than most in his generation would have been; he is more courageous in facing the insistence of sex facts and phenomena; he is reluctant that convention cannot be overridden flatly enough by scientific detachment to allow him to offer to the world his fuller experiences and conclusions. All this is a perfect mirror of the state of mind from 1870 to 1914. As a social document his achievement is therefore notable.

Emphatically, however, this is only one item in his life history, and in the totality a subordinate phase among many interests which engaged Mr Hall's attention. But upon Mr Hall's enthusiasm, wide activity, and sweeping accomplishment as a professional

psychologist and educator it is less necessary to enlarge, because of the already wide public acknowledgement of his contribution. The very unconventionality of his approach to his favourite subjects has given his scientific writings a fresh human suggestiveness not equalled save by William James.

In the world of educational method, Mr Hall's contribution is notable. He was of those scholars who are eclectic and synthetic in method and vision rather than highly intensive in some isolated field. By virtue of the stimulus of this trait, much needed in American scholarship, he built up a graduate school, the influence of which in the fields of psychology and pedagogy will for a long time be felt in colleges the world over. His reputation is not as a scientist of the plodding type, but rather as the common sense Yankee kind of thinker and worker in research who found comfort in "the good old Aristotelian dictum to the effect that it was only affectation to treat any subject by more exact methods than the subject matter required."

One occasionally senses the garrulity of an old man creeping in, occasionally the disposition to offer opinions about matters quite remote from the field of the writer's scientific study. But in general there is the scientist's conscientious effort to state facts—facts observed in varied fields through many years by an avid, inquisitive mind. The effort to understand—to understand himself—is pursued eagerly, but without any disagreeable sense of introspectiveness over-indulged. The sense of detachment is remarkable. One leaves the book rather with the feeling that this scientist struggled to understand in areas of human experience where he was not in his day appreciated. He wanted more of life and wisdom than he could get—especially with his antecedents so fully in view. He wanted to tear away coverings and disguises in an era when this was offensive. He discloses, in short, a human being—a struggling soul, a keen honest mind, a spirit remarkably humble, brave—and timid. He pictures himself in vivid fashion, walking through a generation whose whispered mention of matters of the flesh was in the wholly decorous term, *vita sexualis*!

ORDWAY TEAD

A HISTORIAN OF CONQUESTS

HERNANDO DE SOTO, Together with an Account of one of his Captains, Gonçalo Silvestre. By R. B. Cunninghame Graham. 12mo. 277 pages. Lincoln MacVeagh. The Dial Press. \$2.50.

LIKE his friends Conrad and Hudson, Mr Cunninghame Graham is in a certain sense a writer of memoirs; like them he directed his youthful energies, in remote and barbaric lands, to other ends than literature; and his creative life, like theirs, has been an uninterrupted intercourse with the shades which inhabit those distant years. "All that we write is but a bringing forth of something we have seen or heard about"; and his memory goes back—by right of his Spanish blood, and by virtue of the wildernesses, the bivouacs, the howling tribes, the little gallant parti-coloured horses, the hunger and thirst, of his youth in South America—to the conquest by Spain of the Western hemisphere. "Just as a wild goose with a broken wing will start in Spring to walk towards the pole, so do we set out, impelled by a sort of racial instinct that sends us filibustering"; the age of filibustering, which has lasted more than four centuries, may now be drawing to a close, for the resistance of primitive peoples appears to have been broken; and the conquest by which a dreary but profitable imitation of Europe is being spread over the earth may be completed without much more of the bitter warfare in which that curious mingling of stoicism and cruelty, cant and religious faith, which Mr Cunninghame Graham describes, was brought out in the characters of those who conquered. In writing of the first assault of Europe on the non-European world, he has characterized by implication all the later conquests, particularly those in which England played Spain's part; and thus he has brought the beginning and the end of a historic cycle under the same impartially tragic scrutiny.

In a number of volumes, he has written the histories of Cortez in Mexico, of the conquests of Colombia and the Argentine, of the Jesuit colony in Paraguay; and the book which The Dial Press has just reissued is an account of the life of de Soto. This intrepid

man, with his "close, wavy crop of hair, a pointed beard, moustaches rather long and drooping, and, on the whole, more like a poet than a warrior," first took part with Pizarro in the sack of Peru. He went as ambassador to the Inca Atahualpa, in whose gardens were "trees and other small plants and herbs, animals and other vermin, imitated to the life in gold and silver." The scene in which this prince, "borne in a golden litter high on his followers' shoulders, his cortège shining in the sun with gold, their drums all beating and their whistles blowing, slowly drew nigh to his doom," in which he discusses with a priest the mysteries of faith, and finally is attacked—his Arcadian subjects "suffering themselves to be slain like sheep," and he himself dragged "from the litter by his long plaited hair"—is no less terrible than strange. Later de Soto returned with his booty to Spain, and in 1538 set out once more to subdue Florida, where "thick and sweet-smelling pine-woods drooped their branches in the waves," and there were "flowers, flowers, and still more flowers, with scented grasses, and metallic-looking foliage, and feathery canes . . ." But that expedition, on which they discovered the Mississippi, but no gold, was a dreadful affair—an interminable floundering in swamps, deeds of useless heroism and insane brutality, starvation, and death pursuing them like a cloud of insects; and at last de Soto died, and his men, placing his body in a hollowed oak, launched it upon his river, where it "floated for a minute in the swift yellow flood, and then, settling down deeper, vanished from sight."

Mr Cunningham Graham writes with a rough magnificence—image and aphorism intermingled, subtle and deliberate rhetoric arrested by a man of action's blunt statements; as a whole, somewhat more capricious than arranged, more rich than economical. But even his redundancies have a marked expressive value, and the style, though not suave, has nevertheless a stately music.

He has not forgotten that the chroniclers on whom later historians depend were bigotted, partial men, usually men who, in the fever of events, fought on one side or the other. So he has made them also characters in the drama, revealing themselves and contradicting each other, as if on a little platform before the stage. Obviously a more opinionated historian would be easier to follow; for in a true account, truth is a will-o'-the-wisp, hardly to be identified.

In reviewing the lives of these conquerors, a question is sure to form in one's mind, scarcely worth asking and never to be answered: were they good or evil? The last implication of Mr Cunninghame Graham's account is that life has always two faces; if one be heroism, the other is brutality; where there is zeal, there will be persecution; and when savages are to be civilized, something of this sort is the price: "Whole villages were found hanging dead to trees, having preferred to die by their own hand rather than perish in the mines or by the lash. 'It was,' says Garcilasso, 'the greatest pity upon earth to see them hanging from the trees, like starlings when men set out snares.'"

There is no indulgence in the work of this sad Scotch and Spanish writer. His knife-like mind is set against all fraudulent romances, all fat after-dinner complacencies, all partisan praise or blame. On every page there is an implied address to the reader; and if he be hypocritical or optimistic, he may wish he had never opened the book, for a fierce scorn is his reward. And the proud man of letters must accept as a compliment the fact that he has rarely received from the public at which he mocks any very loud or unanimous applause, if he prefers to say with Yeats,

"There is not a fool can call me friend,
And I may dine at journey's end
With Lander and with Donne."

GLENWAY WESCOTT

EROS

DEATH IN VENICE. *By Thomas Mann. Translated from the German by Kenneth Burke. 12mo. 284 pages. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.*

I AM glad not to be a habitual reviewer of books. There are, conceivably, several more painful ways of making a living, but none, I think, more disastrous to self-esteem. In the ordinary case, the critic, as the poor fellow is called, is in duty bound to read so many volumes that are utterly and irredeemably bad that either he loses all power of discrimination, or else, against this incessant manifestation of total depravity, he withdraws into a sort of pontifical superiority, a state of mind often observed among those modern arbiters of elegance, the conductors of columns for newspapers. Quite other, but equally tragic in its effect, is the professional perusal of masterpieces. Far be it from me to suggest that one masterpiece per week is the average drop of cool water accorded to the critic in his torment; one masterpiece a year would be nearer the truth, and even this estimate implies an excessively open-minded attitude toward contemporary literature. But the effect of such fair, if occasional rewards, upon the hungry recipient who himself writes is often far from healthy. It appears to stimulate that sleeping monster which Freudians, with their happy gift for nomenclature, have designated the inferiority-complex. Once, say every ten years, the creature abruptly awakes and tears its unhappy possessor almost asunder. Of course he recovers, but in the interim he has a bad time. The nightly prayer of innumerable Snodgrasses and Gigadibs might well be: "O God, send us fewer and lesser masterpieces! Better that everything in contemporary literature be abject and sick even as in me! Better far that this troubling work of art had never been born to torture me across the immense gulf fixed between myself and it!

"And among that million, minus one
Might have chanced to be
Shakespeare, another Newton, a new Donne—
But the One was Me."

But one, I repeat, gets over it. After that moment of profound dejection, of noble despair, the reviewer pulls himself together, and remembers that state of life to which it has pleased God to call him. It is very nice to feel the hopeless beauty of the wan seas and roses framing the Venus Anodomyne, but better still, perhaps, to get down to a really intelligent discussion of Botticelli's colour-values. Has not Pater told us that criticism itself may be an art? Snodgrass, albeit not himself a maker of masterpieces either in flesh or word, can yet write graceful and discerning phrases about the masterpieces of others. So slowly and creakingly he gets down the old and dusty *impedimenta*—his critical vocabulary, his method. Nearsightedly he adjusts the telescope, and examining the pure and perfect thing across the gulf, discovers to his relief that it is not nearly so perfect after all. Splendid! There are one or two visible flaws in the statue. The thighs are perhaps a trifle too coarsely moulded; the teeth, alas, are a little jagged and pale. The monster closes one eye appeased, and presently dozes off into quiescence. Then armed cap-à-pie with the armour of effrontery, and having on his head the helmet of platitude, and on his breast (if he will assail a Thomas Mann) the buckler of self-righteousness, Snodgrass descends to the painful encounter. A few moments and all is over; the pure and perfect thing is definitely stalked, and its trophy in the form of a cheque is snug in the pocket of Snodgrass.

In re-reading Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*, I have experienced the same feeling of impotence and humility which I have somewhat irritably ascribed to the *gens* reviewer. And I have further demanded why it should be necessary to break the sacred terror; or to smelt down the gold and ivory of this work of art into a medium appropriate to the laboratory-table. *Domine, non sum dignus*, say I, and am tempted to let it go at that. I have never seen a notice of *Death in Venice* in English, and I should be extremely curious to see one, if only to observe how the stout lads of the literary press, *sans peur et sans reproche*, get away with it. How is it possible to write of such a book without employing some impertinent jargon reeking of lamp oil, to say nothing of some more clinical media? Merely to uncover up to a certain point its bare outline involves one in a sort of shame.

Briefly, it is the story of the last days in the life of an artist. Gustav von Aschenbach is not an ordinary writer. Equally re-

moved from the commonplace and, above all, from the abnormal, he is one who has gained the confidence of the public and the admiration of critical spirits by a long and patient process of self-discipline which stamps its classic image on every page of his work. At the age of fifty, he is at the height of his fame and self-confidence and . . . he is also inclined to take a brief rest. The well earned moment for a certain relaxation has arrived, and the steamer bears him to Venice in midsummer.

When the novel was first translated in *THE DIAL* I recall someone saying to me: "It is astonishing with what art the author introduces details and episodes which heighten in the reader a cumulative sense of excitement, disquiet, almost of terror, the preparation for some ultimate spiritual disaster which the artist never completely reveals even to the last sentence of the book." This is true. One recalls the meeting with the strange traveller on the steps of the Funeral Hall at Munich in the setting sun; the episode of the aging and painted fop gesticulating on the quay; and the sinister voyage in the gondola, shaped like a coffin, headed unaccountably for the open sea. The symbolism is so delicately implicit that in comparison the symbolism of Ibsen himself seems artificial and obtrusive, dragged in by all its hairs.

In the lounge of his hotel on the Lido, while waiting dinner, Aschenbach remarks a family-group of Polish children, three nun-like girls, and a boy about fifteen. As a somewhat abstract lover of classic forms, he is struck and even "terrified" by the child's really godlike beauty. "He feels that he has never met with anything equally felicitous in nature or the plastic arts." The joyous image of this boy imperceptibly penetrates and stamps itself upon the hyperaesthetic but well-disciplined mind of the great writer as, unobserved, he observes him everywhere, in the lounge, on the beach, in the sunny languid airs of the island city; and it is no fault of Mann's if even the most amorphous and Puritanical reader does not feel a little this troubling beauty also. In this connexion, it is permissible to quote a few lines which are also a tribute to the felicity of the translator.

"And to see how this living figure, graceful and cleancut in its advance, with dripping hair and lovely as some frail god, came up from the depths of sky and sea, rose and separated from the

elements,—this spectacle aroused a sense of myth. It was like some poet's recovery of time at its beginning, of the origin of forms, of the birth of gods."

There is no occasion for villains in art, said Meredith, we are betrayed by what is false within. It is just as true to say that we are sometimes betrayed by what is best and most immaculate within. It is through the lust, wholly of the eyes, or better yet, through the purest contemplation, that the artist is betrayed in Mann's story . . . "His eyes took in the noble form there bordered by blue; and with a rush of enthusiasm he felt that in this spectacle he was catching the beautiful itself, form in the thought of God, the one pure perfection which lives in the mind." He even decides to write a little book about his discovery, and there on the windless beach, his eyes continually drawn to the marvellous body playing on the sands or swimming before him in the surf, he composes his *Art and the Spirit*, half consciously taking the boy as his standard, modelling his lines on those of this body which seems to him so godlike . . . "When he put away his work he felt exhausted, or, as it were, in dispersion; it was as though his conscience were complaining after some transgression."

It is unnecessary to go further in this second-hand delineation of Mann's material, of his protagonist and his symbol; here, as Dryden said, is "a God's plenty" of . . . what the reader will. It has often been pointed out that the greatest works of art sometimes contain two significances, an external one for him who reads alone for the story, and an inner or sacramental one for him who has ears to hear. An excellent example of this dual value, cited by Arthur Machen, is Hardy's *Two on a Tower*. The two are the lady and the unsuitable peasant, but how utterly the thought of "society" and congruity disappears as you advance and find that the theme is really Love.

"Even the accidents [I am quoting Machen] even the accidents are glorified and are made of the essence of the book. The old tower, standing in the midst of lonely red ploughlands far from the highway, is at first only the place where the young peasant studies astronomy; but as you read you feel the change coming; the tower is transmuted, glorified, every stone of it is aglow with

mystic light; it is made the abode of the Lover and the Beloved, it is seen to be a symbol of Love, of an ecstasy, remote, and passionate, and eternal, dwelling far from the ways of men."

It is notorious that a man who feels an emotion, which he is unwilling or unable to express, is often driven to describe it in terms of something else. Dante, for example, in his neo-Platonist aspect, being struck dumb by the presence of Beatrice, could only recover his speech by representing Beatrice as divine Theology. The sunny classic honesty of Mann, enough in itself to reveal him as the countryman of Goethe, has saved him from so absolute a defeat. His motive for writing such a story, like the emotion of his hero, may have been nameless or irreducible to language; nevertheless the artist has intensely felt something, and partly by his intensity, partly by his persuasive art, has so transmitted it that the reader dimly feels it also. Only it was amusing and perhaps essential to transform the primary emotion into the stuff of a purely intellectual problem, an adventure in fiction; to invent, in short, a secondary value, a device repeated any number of times in great literature, and familiar to us, in a highly ingenious and perverse form, in Henry James's *Turn of the Screw*. The factual elements of *Death in Venice* are so simple as to be what the French call *simplistes*. An aging artist in need of a vacation comes upon a little boy at a watering-place. In the presence of the child he experiences a sense of happiness and well-being, so intense that he feels his tired energies stirring in a last and perfect manifestation, and composes a book which is classically linear and beautiful like the boy himself. So far a comprehensible and innocent idyll. Then the *deus ex machina* emerges in the form of the cholera; the authorities are silent fearing for their trade; the boy and his family, unwarned, stay on in the plague-stricken city; and the great writer, knowing the danger, oblivious of his reputation and noble past, stays on also, refrains from warning them, and braves death and disgrace for the sake of his obsession, for a daily sight of the beauty, the idol, he has never even spoken to. "I am drunk with madness all pure," says a writer of the *Anthology*, "I am armed with madness for a long voyage." The catastrophe is all prepared; and the illustrious man of fifty, the national mirror of discipline and dignity, is shaken by an abnormal emotion so intense that he commits what is substantially a crime.

So much for the actual story. It is a little *simpliste*, I have said, but it is very beautifully wrought, and is the sort of thing that might have occurred to a German, especially since the war. As for the latent story, "the inner and spiritual grace," as says the Prayer Book, it is unnecessary, and indeed impossible, to follow it in a notice merely intended to praise a delicate achievement on the part of a distinguished writer. To be inarticulate under certain conditions is after all to be in the best of company. Even to the great Peter Bells of male Hellas a primrose by the river's brim was not always, alas, merely this and nothing more, and to that specious multiplication of values we owe the greatest of Platonic dialogues. They too, the most heroic of peoples, "sublimated" and theologized, unable to articulate, or even to endure, the intolerable beauty which apparently dominated them. "The idol is of little stature, and yet the numerous priests, who breathlessly drag it, attest by their weariness that they are yoked to the car of a God."

CUTHBERT WRIGHT

BRIEFER MENTION

DUCDAME, by John Cowper Powys (12mo, 458 pages; Doubleday, Page: \$2). In this novel we may study the exaltation of physical consciousness as we have it in *Rook Ashover* for whose love three women simultaneously contend. Estranged from him by his detachment—by “an irresistible attraction” on his part “to the feminine body and mind with an absolute lack of emotional passion,” which finds expression in the phenomenon of lovemaking rather than in the blasting power of love—we are not moved by the tragedy of his murder, even dramatically timed as it is to coincide with the birth of his son. By the precision of certain similes, by the black magic—the static flicker—of a proud and prompt imagination, by the author’s passion for the “mysterious, inviolable” beauty of nature, we are genuinely moved.

THE BLACK SOUL, by Liam O’Flaherty (12mo, 253 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2.50). Mr O’Flaherty’s instinctive affiliation with every living form of elemental nature, scaled, furred, feathered, leafed, soft-skinned, or rough-skinned, is stirred in this exciting story to a kind of Spring-ecstasy of splendid and morose abandonment. The dark peat, the yellow seaweed, the white sea-gulls, the furious waves and winds, the deep swift ploughing and sowing, make a memorable background for the almost mythological and Hesiodic loves and hates of his beautiful and savage people. No touch of preciousness spoils the taste of these pages, smacking of ploughed-up earth, salt-bitter wind, and rain-dark air.

THE DREAM, by H. G. Wells (12mo, 318 pages; Macmillan: \$2.50). Mr Wells again employs the device of viewing the present from a period several thousand years hence. His personages of the future hear all about the sex life of a dull young man of to-day and seem mildly surprised at our fuss over infidelities. Evidently the English, two thousand years hence, are just reaching the point the French got to one hundred years ago.

ELSIE AND THE CHILD, by Arnold Bennett (12mo, 344 pages; Doran: \$2.50). Mr Bennett’s latest book of short stories shows all his accustomed competence in handling atmosphere and situation, all his wise grasp on concrete details. It is not lacking in psychological insight, either. And yet not one tale in the baker’s dozen offered but lets the reader down at the end. Possibly because an O. Henry twist is out of character for Mr Bennett. Possibly because any one of these short stories could be expanded into a novel. Possibly because Mr Bennett’s gift is for the detailed patient structure which a novel means, rather than for the analytic elaboration of the mere anecdote. In any event, these smooth, pleasant, sound little stories affect one like a banquet exquisitely prepared and served, but stopping at the hors d’oeuvres.

DISTRESSING DIALOGUES, by Nancy Boyd (8vo, 290 pages; Harpers: \$2).

This book is a collection of papers which have appeared from time to time in *Vanity Fair*. Mildly amusing, fairly witty, they are distressing only to one who scans the horizon for a rapier wit and an immortal brilliance. That their author is an acknowledged leader in another field, may add slightly to the distress, but who will deny, even to poets, their frivolous moments, especially if indulged under a *nom-de-plume*? The book does not pretend to hold a mirror up to Nature, merely a comic mask.

THE ENCHANTED WANDERER, by Nicolai Lyeskov, authorized translation by A. G. Paschkoff, edited with an introduction by Maxim Gorki (8vo, 265 pages; McBride: \$2.50). This story, while marred by an organic defect in the underlying conception, as well as by the irrelevancies and inconclusiveness common to Lyeskov's work, is still rich in entertaining adventures and meaty bits of description. Lyeskov writes of horses, for example, with the voluptuousness of a Marcel Proust and the liveliness of a Thomas Burke.

MARBACKA, by Selma Lagerlöf, translated from the Swedish by Velma Swanston Howard (12mo, 281 pages; Doubleday, Page: \$2.50) is not so much autobiographical as reminiscential, and agreeable companions as the author's family and their friends prove to be, one misses Selma Lagerlöf herself. Each chapter of the book has its own special quality; taken together, they form a series of genre pictures, full of the homely charm of a Dutch interior, where a door a-jar or a bright window magically offers light and mystery at once.

THE PEASANTS, by Ladislav Reymont: **AUTUMN** (8vo, 261 pages; Knopf: \$2.50); and **WINTER** (8vo, 284 pages; Knopf: \$2.50). The first volume of this large novel has the breadth, the detail, and a touch of the drama that one finds in huge Russian historical paintings of the nineteenth century. The persons of the story, though numerous, are nearly all well realized, and the routine of village life is carefully presented. Unfortunately, however, the tedium that characterizes much of the peasants' day infects these leisurely pages. Though the second volume has a good deal more action than the first, it sacrifices for the most part intensity to liveliness. The translation is weak, noticeably in the dialogue.

STORIES and ESSAYS, by Mrs Havelock Ellis, with prefaces by Charles Marriott and George Ives, reminiscences by Mrs Clifford Bax and F. W. Stella Browne, notes by Havelock Ellis (illus., 12mo, 88 and 87 pages, respectively; Free Spirit Press: \$3.20 each volume). It is clear that Mrs Havelock Ellis had the capacity for ardent friendships and a contagious enthusiasm for reforming modern society. As an artist, however, her words were not winged and it is doubtful if they will avail much now that the personality of the author has passed on. The two little volumes make precious souvenirs, no doubt, for the many friends, but will scarcely impress outsiders.

THE LITERARY SPOTLIGHT, edited by John Farrar (8vo, 356 pages; Doran: \$2.50). This book is compiled on the cross-word puzzle plan. The editor in the preface, finger to lip, invites us all to guess who wrote it. The articles are unsigned and perhaps for that reason are quite frank in their criticism of the fashionable intelligentsia with which they deal. Bits of gossip abound and one steps out of the gallery knowing the taste in neckties of Hergesheimer or Heywood Broun, but feeling a bit hazy about their literary standards or critical rating.

CONTEMPORARY FRENCH LITERATURE, by René Lalou, translated by William Aspenwall Bradley (8vo, 402 pages; Knopf: \$2.50). Beginning with Literary Influences in 1871, this volume gives an amply detailed and well arranged account of French literature up to the present hour. Biography is minimized, almost eliminated, the predominant concern being with the themes, methods, and interrelationships of the writers under discussion. There are some reversals (as in the discounting of Laforgue) but M Lalou usually approaches his subjects without resistance, dwelling preferably on their claims to distinction. Here is the spectacle of a tremendous literary activity, each writer with his reputable share of intelligence, originality, and energy, and each contributing, by perhaps too personal a note, to the variety of the sum total. And de Gourmont is, by such evidence, staunchly supported in his thesis that, if this is decadence, then decadence does not mean lack of creative vitality.

THE AUTHORS' THAMES, by Gordon S. Maxwell, illustrated by Lucille Maxwell (8vo, 324 pages; Brentano: \$4.50). Provided with a chronological list of authors and painters, with a general and a topographical index, this book "about the Thames Valley lying between London and Windsor," enchants the errant bookworm with resplendent fragments of poetry, of humour, and of biography, culled from nineteen centuries of literary history. Although the crispness of the recital is sometimes lost in gratuitous climax and mild exposition, one is transported by the veracious presence of Elias Ashmole, Gay, Fuller, Pope, Walpole, Dr Johnson, Fanny Burney, R. D. Blackmore, and a host of other literary luminaries.

OLD ENGLISH TOWNS, by William Andrews and Elsie M. Lang (illus., 8vo, 438 pages; T. Werner Laurie, London). Enriched by photographs, drawings, and by most alluring early engravings, by curious epitaphs, and manifold engaging items transcribed from civic monuments, taxation rolls, parish registers, from the Domesday Book, from Leland the antiquarian, from John Aubrey, and from The Venerable Bede, these historical accounts of the rise of forty-three English towns provide a wealth of information concerning customs and stirring episodes of old-time social life. Although the rhetoric of the recital—particularly that of Mr Andrews—is a courageously unpanoplied accompaniment to the glittering pageantry of the matter recorded, the reader has not the hardihood to be ungrateful to authors whose research has provided from history and legend so much that is rewarding.

A VANISHED ARCADIA, by R. B. Cunninghame Graham (8vo, 288 pages; Lincoln MacVeagh; Dial Press: \$3). This suggestive book is really a pessimistic tract for the times. Though there is little in the style of it to whet that appetite for the romantic and the aristocratic associated with the personality of its picturesque author, the book is certainly a vigorous defence of a life of civilized leisure and happiness as opposed to the vulgarity of Progress. The amiable Machiavellism of these excellent Jesuits is pictured as defending their Paraguay Indians from both commercialism and competition, and, incidentally, from slavery. This benevolent despotism, with human happiness full of leisure and gaiety as its purpose, leaves us with a vision of an order of society at once religious, communistic, and hedonistic; an order of things gracious and beguiling, but so different from everything, either capitalistic or proletarian, as we know it to-day, that its atmosphere is that of a sadly remote fairy-story.

WILLIAM GLACKENS, by Forbes Watson (illus., 4to, 23 pages; Duffield: \$2) is a monograph. As an illustrator, Glackens possesses a graphic proficiency that is frequently charming; as a painter, he has nothing important to say. He is living proof of the fact that Renoir is not, as Fuseli said of Blake, "a damned good man to steal from." For the most part the disciples of Renoir have come to a bad end, and Glackens is no exception. He has in common with the Frenchman a certain sensuous approach to life, but his vision lacks penetration, and his pictures, aesthetically considered, are only pleasing statements of sentimentalized laziness. Art, great or small, is born of stern convictions—Glackens seems to paint for the fun of it and not for any expressive purpose.

A MIXTURE, by H. M. Bateman (4to, 104 pages, Lincoln MacVeagh, Dial Press: \$4.50). A book of drawings by one of the finest "comics" in the world. It includes Mr Bateman's masterpiece, The One-Note Man, which achieved instant fame upon its appearance in Punch; but there are many other squibs that the discreet will not quickly tire of. It was an excellent idea to give these drawings a permanent dress.

EXPERIENCE AND NATURE, by John Dewey (8vo, 443 pages; Open Court: \$3). Pragmatism, in its programme of reasoning only by what can be "denoted," might be seen as the extension of Descartes' project for advancing on the basis of what cannot reasonably be doubted. It is also, however, a recognition of what cannot (read, *need not*) be attained by such a method—a compromise which philosophy has not heretofore been willing to accept and which is probably acceptable now only because the present wealth of empirical research makes such a scheme less disastrous to the business of philosophizing than it would have been to the older metaphysical system-builders. Thus, pragmatism frankly admits that it has no subject-matter exclusively its own, and makes a genuine attempt to become the *scientia scientiarum*, a common tongue in which the specialized dialects mediate, "a critical method of developing methods of criticism." Professor Dewey is both ingenious and thorough at carrying out the implications and ramifications of a philosophy which might be written in a paragraph or a library.

THE THEATRE

I HAVEN'T the slightest inclination to be perverse this month and with pleasure I follow the leaders and declare that the Actors' Theatre production of *THE WILD DUCK* is the most satisfactory play of the month and, probably, of the season. Certainly that feeling of well-being which comes of seeing something interesting in itself interestingly presented has been rare this year, and *THE WILD DUCK* affords that pleasure in the highest degree.

It must be a fine play to read—which I did not suspect when I read it many years ago. The performance given by Alla Nazimova and Lionel Atwill did not send me hurrying back to the text because I was turned against Ibsen then; and the present production is so rounded and complete that the text is superfluous. That is, the producers (Miss Clare Eames and Mr Dudley Digges) have rediscovered Ibsen *as a dramatist*, and have put into his proper place Ibsen the moralist, the social philosopher, the student of neurotic human beings.

I should be as boring as young Ekdal with his borrowed enthusiasm for the claim of the ideal if I insisted eternally in these pages on the aesthetic side of the drama. But just as *PROCESSIONAL* indicated clearly the significance of *method*—the very capacity of a proper method to say something more important than the subject it conveyed—so the current *WILD DUCK* suggests that if you recognize the character of a work of art and produce it so that that character or quality is shown, all other things will fall into place. Miss Nazimova subdued the play to her purpose, to histrionism, that is, instead of drama, and covered histrionics with a mantle of morbid psychology. The play could not be tragi-comedy then, and the psychology seemed warped and far-fetched. Played correctly *THE WILD DUCK* leads us easily to believe that Ibsen knew what our later psychoanalysts have taught us—that the people we call normal are also possessed of complicated neuroses. And as he was a supremely skilful dramatist he pointed the complexes of the normal people by showing similar tangles in those whom life had thrown a little off their courses— young Ekdal is old Ekdal over again and the idealist Werle is as mad as the demoniac drunkard downstairs.

The quarrel with Ibsen, and with the idol set up by Bernard Shaw in the Quintessence of Ibsenism, comes to life again. It is my guess that the Quintessence was written before Shaw had seen many of the plays on the stage; he certainly couldn't have seen them rendered for all their dramatic worth and continued without some reservations his propaganda for Ibsen the moralist. Yet Ibsen justified Shaw again and again, and never more absurdly than in the end of *THE WILD DUCK*. The suicide of Hedvig, which even Ibsen could not manage to make real or necessary and which he muddled with the rejected suspicion of an accident, is a violent fit of morality, and dramatically it has almost no relation to the characters implicated. Werle has barely managed to persuade the girl to kill the duck; dramatically the child's consent is insufficiently motivated. Ekdal has been hardly more unbearable than he had been before. Nothing accounts for suicide—except the opening scenes of the play, the burning hatred Gregers Werle has for his father.

There you have a motive as unsuspected as the motives commentators ascribe to Hamlet. It is no pursuit of the ideal—it is a furious effort to destroy whatever his father has created—that drives Gregers Werle to attack the house of Ekdal. Oedipus Complex is Exhibit A in the affair; and the conscious hatred of his father leads Gregers to an unconscious desire to do away with his father's presumptive child. I put this forward not as an explanation of the play, but as a possible emotional texture, a continuity of motive which may not be true, but even as myth it makes *THE WILD DUCK* far more intelligible than it is as it now stands.

The catch in such an explanation is obvious. Ibsen knew unconscious motives and used them; as a dramatist he brought them to the surface. And the motives I have suggested are not in *THE WILD DUCK*. Perhaps because he was preoccupied with the intellectual problem of the idealist, Ibsen in this case scamped his treatment of the emotions and left us with inadequate clues to explain the mystery of Hedvig's suicide. Unless we are to explain it by the dreary supposition that, being a gloomy Nordic, Ibsen had to have a killing at the end to bring his lesson home.

The battle between father and son is the springboard of the whole action, even as the play is presented to us. But as the son is a fool, tragedy is not necessarily involved. Ekdal, too, is a fool.

It was the most obvious thing in the world, and at the same time the most illuminating, that he was the forerunner and remains the inner truth of our own *SHOW-OFF*. I am aware that fools can precipitate tragedies; but I feel that the moral lessons learned from such tragedies are uninteresting, and that the comedy of fools is sufficiently "*larmoyante*."

If Ibsen wrote a comedy in spite of himself, as the Actors' Theatre believed, their production was right in every major respect. How the text can be twisted to make Ekdal an intelligent person and, consequently, Werle a tragic hero, I cannot see. There are humorous passages which are farcical and even grotesquely obvious and there is a constant comedy of situation. The human attractiveness of all the characters transpires as soon as the comedy is brought forth—and a richness and wisdom which even the ending cannot destroy.

As the representative of the only confessedly highbrow journal in America I waited until the twelve-hundredth performance to see *ABIE'S IRISH ROSE* and I was disappointed. Primarily because the humour of it is not at all racial humour, either for the Irish or for the Jewish. It is stage-Irish and stage-Jewish humour. And I was grieved to note that it was not, as I had been led to expect, a sympathetic treatment of both peoples. The play deals with exceedingly snobbish antagonisms which are unresolved except in the persons of the rabbi and the priest; Abie and his Rose are both rather mean about religious differences and racial customs, and as there is no imaginative touch making any one a real person, Irish or Jew, the play is slightly disagreeable to think about. I had hoped for entertainment and did not go in the spirit of those who want to discover how such a play can attract the millions (in spectators and in dollars) it does. I like unintellectual plays and can take pleasure in the awkwardness of bad acting. *ABIE'S IRISH ROSE* let me down terribly. Mr Alexander Woollcott who reads, but does not get the sense of, English words, is hereby invited to make the most of this.

Unlike my fellow-critics, I am not expert in the language of the illiterate. How they know that every word, every pronunciation, and every phrase of *THE FALL GUY* is correct, I wonder. To me

accuracy is not so important; consistency, the general effect, is. And this quality the language of *THE FALL GUY* has. I have heard people say "erl" and "mersture" and I suppose they say "oinist bird," but a playwright may get all of these words wrong and still present the American language if his ear for rhythm and cadence is good. Messrs Gleason and Abbott seem to have done very well and Ernest Truex and Ralph Sipperly speak the speech as truck drivers and drug clerks pronounced it to them. The plot is not unattractive; but I am tired of the laugh which arises at the spectacle of common people eating and putting too much butter on their bread. (The same touch again in *THE WILD DUCK*, by the way.)

Further notes: *PIERROT THE PRODIGAL* is attractive, but not utter; *SKY-HIGH* has a chorus stretching from pillar to post and six extra dippers who dance well and Willie Howard frequently, but not always, funny; *STARLIGHT* is hokum and Miss Keane either does or doesn't know it, depending on what she can get out of the part; *PUPPETS* is a melodrama which sags and is supported by a marionette show; *THE DARK ANGEL* is nothing marvelous, but if Mr Michael Arlen did, as is reported, have a hand in it, he has learned delicacy a little; the producers of *DESIRE UNDER THE ELMS* quote Mr John Farrar as saying that the play is "obviously cleanly," suggesting a new form of the catharsis of pity and terror.

GILBERT SELDES

MODERN ART

AS critic I have no desire to push individuals or movements. I shouldn't in the least care to implant ideas in artists' minds and see them work out my theories. My theories are all *ex facto*. I am a stand-off. I record merely. I feel this so strongly that I have conjured one or two painters I am fond of never to read what I say of them or their work. I should take no pleasure in their productions if I thought myself in any way responsible for them. Feeling this I suppose I should confine myself to writing about dead men, and would, were it not that contemporary life is the real garden in which I dig, and living artists are the roses that indicate the richness of poverty, as it occurs, of *mes terrains*. I solve my own problem then by writing of the quick as others write of the dead; that is, with the same detachment.

I say this to nullify my failure to discover anything new in cubism lately. This winter, as last, there are no new names upon my calendar; and no developments save, perhaps, in the way of amelioration. Matisse and Picasso go on into new graces, but not into cubistic graces. The theme with them is more decipherable than it was and this not because we have grown more adept in reading, but because they are more succinct. Matisse's earlier studies were aimed at suppleness, both in thought and in presentation, and have marvellously succeeded, but in the newer works the schemes focus upon passages so emphatically pure, as paint and value, that Manet himself, could he see, would be the first to appreciate them. The cold, aloof, thoroughly conscious compositions of Picasso, on the other hand, while in line with all our mocking acceptations of untutored, but always decorative art, say nothing as painting. His reputation which pauses awhile with us centres upon the forcefully abstract things he has now abandoned, which, as far as we are concerned, are already classic. The pause may be only apparent, but the pace in production had been so furious, up to this, that it must be remarked. However, I have not come to bury Caesar nor to minimize the achievements of a dead Caesar. In certain circles I am supposed to be so exclusively wrapped up in cubism that even to note a cessation in the excite-

ments of the movement may be confounded with preparations for the obsequies; which is absurdly premature. "The king is dead" and "Long live the king" are shouted with one breath. The curiously prolonged domination of cubism is due as much as anything to the fact that menacing interlopers fail to appear. The plotting candidates for the throne, if they exist, keep as yet to their cellars, and cubism, when it does die, for all we know at present, must die respectably in bed of old age. Which is all odd enough. Are there to be no more "movements"?

The above entries in my records were made before the openings of the Stieglitz and Independent exhibitions, but after seeing them I have no obligation to change my tune, though both shows hinge upon cubism. The fact is, the fate of abstract art is not deeply dependent upon anything that American artists have done. A few have become interesting, due to the new liberal tendencies, who might not otherwise have had notice, but the post-office address of the giants has always been Paris. So the circumstance that the American progressives remain much as they were, is not especially significant. The really diverting point in regard to the Stieglitz Group is that it has made some new friends in literary circles. I have always bewailed the indifference of our poets and novel-writers to art and cited it as one other of the handicaps our men labour under. But this injustice is to pass, it seems. No less a personage than Mr Sherwood Anderson has fallen in love with the Stieglitz Group *en masse*. He celebrates his attachment in the following poem which figures as preface to the catalogue:

"SEVEN ALIVE

"The city is very tired.

The men and women of the city are very tired.

When you have been a long time away from simple, elemental things, from wind, clouds, rain, fire, the sea—these things become a little terrible.

What frightened children we are!

But always there is something happening.

Men constantly die, but men are also born again.

Here are seven artists bringing to you city-dwellers their moments of life.

They also are tired as you are tired; life presses down upon them as it presses down upon you.

See them here in their moments of life—when life, pumped through their bodies, crept down into their fingers.

When they were alive and conscious of all—everything—

When they were conscious of canvas, of color, of textures—

When they were conscious of clouds, horses, fields, winds and water.

This show is for me the distillation of the clean, emotional life of seven real American artists."

Mr Anderson, in his poem, sounds, you will observe, the note of fatigue; and I fear this motif was suggested to him by Mr Marsden Hartley's pictures. Mr Hartley is excessively old-world and old-souled, and gets a curious un-lived quality into his works that disconcerts, especially on the walls where shown at present. I have seen autumn leaves pressed in old books of poems that have seemed completely detached from any known form of existence and Mr Hartley's works are equally apart. I found myself recalling Miss Havisham and the dusty wax image of Charles II in Westminster Abbey. At the same time there are possibilities in them for more elegance than Miss Havisham or that wax image ever achieved; and the right kind of a decorator might accomplish wonders with them on the right kind of a wall. It is within the grounds of possibility that a future age will decide that these weary pictures express admirably the world-exhaustion of after the war, though it makes Mr Hartley's own friends, of whom I am one, gasp at the notion that he, Atlas-like, sustains the whole burden.

The Independent Society used to hang its pictures alphabetically and with a resultant confusion that was held by some to be jazz-like. It goes back this year to the group system and the first result is that the cubists, such as they are, predominate. Their section has more life, colour, and general gaiety than any other. The exhibition as a whole is the dullest to date; due chiefly to the scarcity of the wildly-comic pictures, but the new system, if persisted in, may make the institution more valuable as a vehicle for ideas. Grouped, they will count.

HENRY MCBRIDE

MUSICAL CHRONICLE

THEY played Europe and the New World off against each other at the final concert of the International Composers' Guild. Schoenberg's Serenade began the programme; Varèse's *Intégrales* ended it; and the opposition called up the full breadth of the Atlantic. Each composition beat briefly the rhythm of life upon its proper shore. It was delicate lacework sound against brute shrilling jagged music. It was the latest ghostly flowering of the romantic tradition against a polyphony not of lines, but of metallic cubical volumes. It was, essentially, the thinking introverted solitary against mass-movement in which the individual goes lost; for the reason either form did its author uncommon justice. Few works of Schoenberg traverse less writing for the eye than this new one, and breathe more thoroughly. The March which leads on the piece and then leads it off again may belong very largely to the company of Schoenberg's dry paper-musics. But the rest of the little movements, the minuet, the variations, and the setting of Petrarch's sonnet Number 217, the dance scene and the song without words, flow lightly, and bring within their small compass and in the familiar character of the serenade a very personal quality of sound. The mood is serener perhaps than it was in *Pierrot Lunaire*, and the movement less languorous and less explosive. Nonetheless, the music's quality is similarly half-painful, half-dreamy; the tone eerie and *sotto-voce*; the structure submitted to intense concentration. The nervous excited strumming of the mandoline and guitar called for by the score has correspondences throughout the form. And like so much of Schoenberg, the Serenade is fundamentally Brahmsian in feeling. The conservatism of the structure, the frequency of rhythmic repetitions, the symmetrical formation of motifs, themes, and entire sections, has been marked by the German aestheticians. Perfectly apparent to the layman is the brooding romanticism of the *melos*, particularly in the song without words, and the spook-romanticism of the loose-jointed periods of the minuet and dance-scene. The characteristic undulant movement, the lyrical upheavals of the line, true, have been compressed by this ultramodern into minute spaces. They

have been immeasurably tightened, curtailed, and broken up. But they exist in Schoenberg as essentially as in Schumann, Wagner, and Brahms. That is the German, apparently; and the European in touch with his own fertile background. Schoenberg is the carrier-on, the continuator of his predecessors' patient search for truth. Like theirs, his interest is the struggle for greater "subjective" truth and naturalness, and his problem the shaping of means toward the incorporation of his inherited way of feeling. The values raised by the dead great give a certain ardour and restlessness to his search; one knows he is not easily to be satisfied, and that he drives his medium relentlessly to greater suppleness and precision. His frontage upon life is merely narrower than theirs was. He is the man of his hour, and that hour is a difficult and tortured one, less communicable than its forerunners, isolating its members in moody loneliness and semi-mystical adventure. Schoenberg's music sounds as exquisite, shadowy, and remote as Paul Klee's painting looks. Brahms shudders like a ghost. But precisely this utter faithfulness is traditional.

Passing from the *Serenade* to *Intégrales* is like passing from the I-ness to the it-ness of things, from a hypersensitive unworldly feeling to a sense of strident material power, and from a traditional expression to one which, in all its independence, roots as largely in jazz as in Berlioz and Strawinsky. Varèse stems from the fat European soil quite as directly as Schoenberg does. It is the serious approach, the scientific curiosity, of what of the nineteenth century remained on the Continent, that has strengthened and sent him outward. But his experience has been the New World, in dream and in contact. He has felt it directly, imaginatively, and through music bridged a way to greater apprehension. Varèse never has imitated the sounds of the city, as he is frequently supposed to do, or supposed to have been said to do by critical writers. His work is much more the penetration. He has come into relationship with elements of American life, and found corresponding rhythms within himself set free. Because of this spark of creativeness, it has been given him to hear the symphony of New York as it has been heard by practically none before him. If you ask him he will tell you how different it is from that of Paris; for Paris' symphony is noisier, a succession of shrill, brittle, hissing sounds, and New York's quieter, merely because

it is incessant, tidal, enveloping one's existence as the rivers the island of Manhattan. At those moments Varèse finds himself striving to give form to his feelings about life, the sensations received from the thick current of natural sound push out from the storehouse of the brain as organic portions of an idea. And in *Intégrales* Varèse has found a form richer and more intense than any he has given us to hear. He has grown: the new piece is superior in composition and force to *Hyperprism*, and larger and more complicated than *Octandre*. In quality of sound it is entirely Varèse; the piercing golden screams, sudden stops, extremely rapid *crescendi* and *diminuendi* are his own. But for the first time in modern music, more fully even than in the first section of the *Sacre*, one found an equivalent for Wotan's spear. *Intégrales* is informed with a genuine feeling of power. It sounds through the resistance of the grandly moving volumes, through the majesty of the chords, the gorgeousness of the ruddy sonorities, the mastered ferocity of the outbursts. The piece resembles nothing more than shining cubes of freshest brass and steel set into abrupt pulsating swing. The cubism is actually in the construction. Varèse's polyphony is very different from the fundamentally linear polyphony of Stravinsky. This music is built more vertically, moves more in solid masses of sound, and is held very rigorously in them. Even the climaxes do not break the cubism of the form. The most powerful pronouncements merely force sound with sudden violence into the air, thrust it upward like the masses of two impenetrable bodies in collision. And the hardness of edge and impersonality of material are further established by the balance of woodwind, brass, and percussion. The whole brought an amazing feeling of weighty power, much as though the overwhelming bulks of the over-organization, institutionalization, herd-repression, *unkultur* which crush the American individual beneath them suddenly started swinging in obedience to a strength greater than theirs, and began glowing with wonderful new life. Without the juxtaposition of the Schoenberg, *Intégrales* would have brought us a moment of exquisite selfhood. Set by the fragile voice of an old world, it made resume once again the coming-of-age party which composes our best days.

PAUL ROSENFELD

COMMENT

THE DIAL is an intellectual sewer.
John Christen Johansen.

AMONG the industrial centres of the State of Massachusetts there is one well-known as Worcester. In this wholesome and brimming receptacle of legitimate activity a morning newspaper, entitled The Worcester Telegram, remains [since the death of the late G. Stanley Hall] the outstanding intellectual effort.

Myself having had the fortune to be born in the City of Worcester, I am naturally sensitive to the good opinion of her townsmen. I was therefore appreciably let down at reading in The Worcester Telegram:

"THE DIAL is an intellectual sewer."

Mr John Christen Johansen, to whom the generously-typed heading of the six-column illustrated interview alludes as

FAMOUS AMERICAN ARTIST

and of whom his interviewer writes:

"He studied with Vanderpoel, Duveneck, Whistler, Freer, Lawrens [sic]—but why mention his masters? He is Johansen!"

this distinguished gentleman has been painting a portrait of the President of what in Worcester, Massachusetts, is alluded to as "An Institution of the Higher Learning"; to wit, Clark University. It was therefore wholly natural that he should be interviewed at length by The Worcester Telegram, and wholly natural he should express himself in a straightforward fashion upon the present state of that art which he practises. And there is no reason under heaven why he should not say his word upon those workers, contemporary with himself, whom he regards as at once misled and misleading.

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And I wholly agree with Mr Johansen (and with Pablo Picasso as well ¹) that, as Mr Johansen briefly puts it,

"There is no such thing as 'the modern,' or 'the new' in art. There is good, or bad."

I regret only that Mr Johansen is so misinformed as to believe:

"They ['modern' artists] are not willing to spend any time on craft, in learning how to do things well."

Failing personal acquaintance with any serious 'modern' artist, a reading of *THE DIAL* (did Mr Johansen not take his moral exception to it) as, for example, of the article by Hans Purrmann on Henri Matisse,² might have disabused Mr Johansen of this wholly ungrounded if, among the vulgar, wide-spread illusion.

But why narrate this anecdote?

"Several years later I saw that 'modern' painter again, with some other pictures he had recently made to hang in his own home. They were nothing at all like the horrors we had seen before. They were real art.

"What has become of your enthusiasm over the futuristic school?" I asked.

"Oh," he replied, 'I am painting for my own pleasure and not for the public.'"

Surely Mr Johansen is not unaware that the canvases of Picasso,

¹ Cf. the interview with Picasso printed in *The Arts* for May, 1921: "Cubism is no different from any other school of painting. The same principles and the same elements are common to all." And *passim*.

² Purrmann, writing as a student in Matisse's "workshop," reports: "Matisse's efforts were directed to the establishment of a rigid discipline in his studio. He proclaimed the value of caution, he led painters back to the solid foundation of study, to a long and patient observation." And he quotes Matisse as follows: "'You are not committing suicide if you lean more on nature and strive for an exact reproduction. You must first subject yourself to nature, recapture it, then motivate it and perhaps even heighten its beauty! But you must be able to walk well on the ground before you get on the tight-rope.'"

when he was yet painting in a relatively realistic manner, were quite regularly bringing decent figures? And that his public pretty generally¹ refused to stomach and to buy his cubistic work? And that there are scores of such 'modern' artists now working throughout Europe and America, men who must carry on their daily industry in the teeth of the matter-of-fact knowledge that there exists in this world no market for their product? And that these men might, if they would but paint as they learned to paint in the schools, and as they there demonstrated they well can paint,—that these men might then earn what is vulgarly called 'a gentlemanly living'? And that, after all, it is Mr J. C. Johansen and not either Pablo Picasso or Miss Georgia O'Keeffe who is in the anyhow financially enviable habit of being invited to paint a life-sized portrait of President Wallace Walter Atwood of Clark University?

And why in discussing 'Modern Art' pose this question?

"Why try to force the beliefs and ideas of Eastern Europe on us? We are not the type of people for it. It is our ambition to be clean, wholesome, decent."

Is not Mr Johansen aware that the tendency in art against which he inveighs originated in France? And that its leaders, with the exception of Picasso, who is a Spaniard, have been Frenchmen? Is France (or is Spain, for that matter) in Eastern Europe? Is it the ambition of the French "type of people" to be unclean, unwholesome, indecent?

And surely one who, like Mr Johansen, would appear to prefer that artists should paint for their "own pleasure and not for the public"² cannot be correctly reported as having said:

"I remember that a woman who had no taste asked my advice about buying pictures. Any academic mind can discover what is really best in paintings or pictures. I told her to buy a \$5 one, and live with it a while, then to buy a \$10 picture, and live with it, and when she felt like it to buy another, a \$15 picture, and when she had three, she would begin to have a basis for comparison of values, and would begin to learn!"

¹ Certain German buyers were an exception.

² See the previous page.

Not only, one guesses, must his word have been 'unacademic' but also this counsel to buy pictures at different prices must be an emanation of a less idealistic mind¹ than that of Mr J. C. Johansen. Buy three pictures; live with them; compare their values as pictures,—by all means! But what has their *commercial* value, their value for the picture-buying *public*, to do with this affair at all?

The intelligence that Mr Johansen already "has painted Hague [sic], Joffre, Diaz, and many military heroes whose portraits are hung in the National Museum of Art, Washington, D. C." and that "his next portrait will be that of President Coolidge" (also, one gathers, for the same august asylum) brings, at this juncture, to the American Citizenry very general relief. Citizens have read how their Chief Executive, as also his good wife, the First Lady of Our Land, have recently been rendered upon canvas (and with natural *éclat*) by Mr Howard Chandler Christy; and of how these two in many ways very considerable canvases now enliven the interior of Washington's Historic White House. Some of us have indeed been so privileged as to glimpse, in the elegant photogravure reproductions, these domestic Van Dykes. It is therefore, just now, particularly reassuring to know that despite this recent aesthetic enrichment of the Executive Mansion the balance of aesthetic power, at our seat of government, need not be disturbed. The National Museum of Art, Washington, D. C. can, *THE DIAL* is now confident, continue to keep up its august end.

From this illuminating interview I further quote two consecutive paragraphs, these latter merely for their documentary value as bearing upon Contemporary American Civilization:

"And it is because Mr Johansen is intellectual, and critical, that he likes to paint college professors and presidents, men identified with science, literature, economic and educational questions.

"Few women have been included among his portraits. Perhaps one reason is that he paints people as they are upon the stage. If they are too refined, the effect is lost."

We herefrom may deduce:—*Primum*, that, as in that England

¹ The interview with Mr Johansen was obtained by Margaret Brandenburg, the wife of the Professor of Economics at Clark University.

from which the original American settlers emigrated, so in America to-day, women are not "upon the stage." *Secundum*, that refinement is in America, by and large, an appurtenance of the female sex. *Tertium*, that in America "college professors and presidents" are not "too refined." . . . Upon this third point we had indeed, from the same Worcesterian source, been adequately *documentés*.

One recalls that a nationally known American economist was invited, with the consent of the President, to address a group of students in Clark University; and that because this guest's economic opinions, despite signally measured utterance, did none the less occasion in the learned President of that University an acute disorder, this guest was not permitted to complete his address,—that the learned President in person mounted the platform and commanded the janitor to put out the lights. . . .

One recalls that The Worcester Telegram then published this pertinent paragraph:

"Preston E. James of Dr. Atwood's geography department said yesterday that Harvard University, by retaining Dr. Laski, a so-called Liberal professor, had lost \$1,000,000 in endowments. He said that if such speakers as Nearing were allowed, Clark would suffer similar consequences."

And that the same esteemed contemporary journal, after regretting, upon the part of the student body of Clark University, misplaced interest in Freedom of Speech, adventured the following pertinent editorial observation:

"Perhaps it is unfortunate Clark college boys do not indulge themselves more extensively in baseball, football and other matters of such critical importance in the lives of ordinary collegians."

That the natural interest of young manhood in athletic games and competition should in America be so hypertrophied as quite to expunge all moral, political, and intellectual interests from American university undergraduate life would appear to be not wholly insusceptible of explanation.

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